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THE

HISTORY

OF

MISS GREVILLE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

E. KEIR, MRS SUSANNA HARKEY

BY THE AUTHOR OF

INTERESTING MEMOIRS.

VOLUME THIRD.

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THE

HISTORY

OF

MISS GREVILLE.

LETTER LXXVI.

Sir Charles Mortimer to Mr Belford.

Harwood.

YOUR anxiety for me, dear Belford, redoubles my diſtreſs, ſince I cannot relieve it, and muſt unavoidably add to your uneaſineſs, by communicating my own. You juſtly obſerve, that ſuſpenſe is the moſt inſupportable of all evils. The anguiſh of ſuſpenſe, however,

is no longer added to the torments of jealouſy. No, Belford, I am now convinced, beyond the poſſibility of doubt, that Rivers, the once endeared, the much deſerving friend, is in truth the formidable rival, the unfortunate, perhaps the innocent cauſe, of all the miſery to which I am now ſubjected. You will confeſs that my laſt furniſhed ample matter for this ſuſpicion: Now the fact appears paſt a doubt. Judge yourſelf, from what follows, whether I have not ſufficient cauſe for my conviction.

My wife, on coming one morning into my dreſſing-room, where I was writing at a bureau much crowded with papers, obligingly made offer of ſending me a ſmall cabinet that ſtood in her own apartment, and for which ſhe ſaid ſhe had no occaſion, as ſhe preferred her mother's. I readily accepted of her gift, and ſhe immediately retired to empty it, and give orders for its being

being removed. Having properly arranged all my letters and papers in the cabinet, I was about to lock it, when, obſerving that it was prevented from cloſing by one of the drawers, which I thought I had miſplaced, I pulled it out, and diſcovered behind it a ſlip of paper, rumpled in ſuch a manner as prevented the drawer from going into its place.

On taking it out, I ſaw it was a copy of verſes, written in my wife's hand, which, without ſcruple or ſuſpicion, I eagerly read.

Though the paper is without date or ſuperſcription, it is evident ſhe has written theſe verſes ſince the death of her father; and I am at no loſs to gueſs the perſon to whom they refer.

O Belford! how agonizing is the thought, that the wife who commands my

higheſt eſteem, whom I love with a fond, a boundleſs, an almoſt idolizing affection, by the waywardneſs of our fate, is condemned to beſtow her's on a man, who, it is plain, has either been inſenſible to, or ungrateful for, her preference.

Ah! who will pity my untimely fate,
What kindred ſpirit mourn my early doom,
What gentle maid my hapleſs tale relate,
Or ſcatter blooming flowrets on my tomb?

No youth have I that bears a brother's name,
No friend to drop compaſſion's ſilent tear,
No father jealous of my virgin fame,
To ſoothe my ſorrows, or to calm my fear!

Thou! ——— wert the guardian of my heart,
The choſen friend I early learnt to truſt;
From thee I hop'd a parent's, brother's part—
How couldſt thou prove thus cruel and unjuſt!

Haſt thou forgotten quite that happy time,
With mutual love, when mutual vows we made?
Credulity, methinks, is all my crime—
Ah! too ſeverely, by thy ſcorn repaid!

Yet

Yet ſhall my burſting heart at length find eaſe,
Nor long this heavy load of life ſuſtain;
Death ſoon ſhall come, who the ſad boſom frées
From every ſorrow, and from every pain.

Come then, and from my dying lips receive
A laſt farewell, from all reſentment free;
O come, and gently bear her to her grave,
Who never lov'd another youth but thee!

Be all her errors baniſh'd from thy mind,
Soon as the painful toil of life is o'er;
Juſt to her merit, to her foibles kind,
Beſtow one tender tear, ſhe aſks no more.

Belford! I am the moſt miſerable of mankind. The ſtrange behaviour of Rivers, of which I gave you an account, is no longer a myſtery. Julia's ſentiments have not always been confined to her own breaſt. They have loved, my friend! and by whatever means their union has been prevented, it is obvious they have formerly projected it. Gracious heaven! how

irretrievable my misfortunes! how complete my deſpair!

I am determined to know the whole of their ſtory; not to gratify a vain and hopeleſs curioſity, but, if poſſible, to diſcover the means of recovering the peace of my unhappy wife, and of defending her honour from thoſe cruel ſuſpicions, that may ariſe in minds leſs confident of her virtue than myſelf, from the ignorance and loquacity of a ſimple cottager, who is nurſe to Lord Rivers, appears to be acquainted with their former intimacy, and from whom I may obtain the information I anxiouſly deſire, without ſtooping to any art, or leading her to betray confidence; as it was plain, from an accidental converſation with her, that what ſhe innocently communicated had not been intruſted to her as a ſecret.

An account of these circumstances I shall give you in my next. At present, I am so much disordered, both in body and mind, that I must say, Adieu.

CHARLES MORTIMER.

LETTER LXXVII.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

My tenderly beloved friend will easily believe, that my uneasiness has not been lessened this week, by the number of visits paid us on occasion of our settling in the country. With a heavy heart have I received their congratulations. Their wishes for my happiness serve only to make me feel more exquisitely its absence. Amongst others, Lord Cleveland, and his two amiable daughters, waited on us yesterday. I felt extreme confusion at sight of the Earl; but his ease and politeness a little reassured me. I never saw more

more engaging ſweetneſs and affability than is expreſſed in the countenance and manner of theſe young Ladies. The eldeſt, Lady Sophia, who appears to be about eighteen, is the very image of Lord Rivers, and has ſomething ſo peculiarly expreſſive in her look, of timid modeſty and ſenſibility, that it is impoſſible not to feel deeply intereſted in her, even at firſt ſight.

She told me that her brother deſired ſhe might preſent me with his compliments and beſt wiſhes; but, being very much indiſpoſed, he could not have the pleaſure of waiting on me.

'We are all unhappy about poor Rivers,' continued ſhe: 'That unfortunate 'wound has certainly affected his health, 'more than he is willing to allow, becauſe 'he ſees our anxiety. My father wiſhes 'him to make trial of Bath; but he has 'ſuch

'such a weight hanging on his ſpirits, that 'I doubt much whether he ſhall be able 'to perſuade him.'

Poor unhappy Rivers! my heart bleeds for his diſtreſſes. The compaſſion we feel for a perſon we cannot eſteem, is painful and incomplete. I now flatter myſelf, that, ſtruck with the preſumption as well as inhumanity of his behaviour, he will not again attempt ſeeing me——

—— Heavens! Maria! how have I been alarmed, ſurpriſed, terrified, by the conduct of the raſh, the unpitying Rivers! His treatment of me is unpardonably inſolent, and diſhonourable in the higheſt degree! He muſt have known that Sir Charles was abſent to-day, on occaſion of a meeting of the gentlemen of the county, on public buſineſs. What then could he intend by this ill-timed clandeſtine viſit?

As

As the air felt very hot in the parlour this morning, I put on my hat, and taking up my baſket with a pair of ruffles I am working for Sir Charles, walked ſlowly down the garden, with intention of reaching the alcove, which you know is kept cool by a breeze from the river. Juſt as I reached the end of the honeyſuckle walk, I thought I perceived ſome one among the trees, but, on ſtopping a few minutes, and ſeeing nobody, perſuaded myſelf I was miſtaken, and purſued the path that leads to the alcove. Being ſtartled by this circumſtance, a faintiſh ſickneſs came acroſs me. I threw myſelf down on a ſeat; but, recollecting that I ſhould get more air at the river ſide, I roſe; and, on quitting the alcove, the firſt object I beheld was Lord Rivers, ſtanding with his arms croſſed, and his eyes fixed on the laurel, the very image of deſpair. A ſudden impulſe of terror and ſurpriſe made me cry out. He ſtarted from his reverie,

reverie, flew to aſſiſt me, and reached me juſt in time to prevent me from falling to the ground. When I had a little recovered my ſenſes, I withdrew myſelf from his arms, which ſtill ſupported me, and endeavoured to return home: But I was ſtill ſo faint, and trembled ſo violently, that I was forced to reſt on the bench near the laurel. Lord Rivers again approached me. 'How unhappy am I,' ſaid he, 'that the ſight of Rivers is now be-'come ſo hateful to you, as almoſt to de-'prive you of life! yet heaven is my wit-'neſs, I ſhun your preſence—I wiſh not 'to give you pain—I ſaw your carriage 'paſs the grove, and ſuppoſed you ab-'ſent.

'O heavens!' continued he, with a look of unutterable woe, 'it was not al-'ways thus. There was a time when Ju-'lia Greville would not have required an 'apology from me, for coming to this oft

'fre-

'frequented ſpot. Julia!' cried he, 'claſp-'ing his hands together in an agony of 'grief, can you—can you indeed behold 'that laurel, and not pity the once loved, 'the now deſpiſed, deſerted, injured Ri-'vers?'

'My Lord,' replied I, riſing, and re-ſuming all the reſentment of offended in-nocence, 'You are the laſt perſon in the 'world from whom I expected to hear this 'language. To add inſult to ingratitude, 'is unworthy of your character—to hear 'any more on this ſubject were injurious 'to mine. I muſt therefore entreat, for 'both our ſakes, that you will abandon it, 'and the remembrance of the paſt, fore-'ver.' 'Cruel, unrelenting Julia!' cried he, as I haſtily withdrew, 'Inſult! ingra-'titude! By heaven, I know not what 'you mean! Oh that, like you, I could 'indeed abandon the remembrance of the 'paſt! But that is impoſſible.' I heard

no

no more, Maria. A thouſand confuſed and terrible images crowded into my mind, and almoſt overwhelmed my ſenſes. I haſtened home; but the words of Rivers haunted me like a ghoſt. In vain I ſtrove to diſcover their inexplicable meaning. To accuſe me of unrelenting cruelty; to profeſs, in the name of Heaven, that he underſtood not the language of my too juſt reproaches. Maria! what can I think? My mind is all confuſion: A light, more terrible than the moſt diſmal darkneſs, ſeems to break in upon me——Rochdale ——the daring, the profligate Rochdale ——Ah! could he—could even that moſt determined, unpitying villain, contrive a ſcheme of ſuch helliſh cruelty! Maria! it is,—O ſay it is impoſſible.——Rivers! If thou art innocent!——Oh, Heaven ſupport me——

LETTER LXXVIII.

Lady Mortimer to Miſs Herbert.

Harwood.

I was ſo ill at the concluſion of my laſt letter, that, when Sir Charles arrived, he was extremely alarmed with my appearance.

He eagerly inquired what was the matter—whether I had taken too much fatigue? I told him I had been no farther than the garden. Has my Julia been oppreſſed with company, then, demanded he?

There has been none here, replied I, with a voice weakened with ſorrow. How! cried Sir Charles ſurpriſed, I met Lord Rivers about a mile from Harwood, and, on inquiring from whence he came, he told me, he had been paying his compliments

ments to you? Yes, Lord Rivers was here, anſwered I, but I only ſaw him a few minutes in the garden. The confuſion and heſitation with which I replied to this ſpeech of Sir Charles, did not eſcape him. He pauſed a few moments, fixed his eyes on the ground, then raiſing them to me, with a look of unutterable tenderneſs, tell me, my Julia! O tell me, cried he, what then has occaſioned this ſudden and violent agitation? I was ſilent ſome moments; I knew not what to anſwer. Incapable of deceit, abhorring to practiſe it, I was on the very brink of diſcovering to my huſband every thought of my heart, when ſuddenly recollecting the fatal conſequences which might attend ſo raſh a ſtep, my reſolution failed, and I determined, by revealing part of the truth, to conceal the reſt.

I am aſhamed, ſaid I, of my own weakneſs; for ſome time paſt, every trifle

diſcompoſes and alarms me. I went to work in the alcove this morning, when the ſudden appearance of Lord Rivers, who was walking in the little grove near it, ſtartled me ſo much, that I have not yet recovered from my fright. Having ſeen the carriage paſs the grove, he imagined we were abſent, and—and—here I ſtopt, utterly at a loſs how to proceed.

An unſucceſsful attempt to miſlead, is attended, in an ingenuous mind, with intolerable anguiſh. It was evident that my confuſed and irreſolute manner confirmed the ſuſpicions I laboured to remove. We both remained ſilent for ſome time, and, through the remainder of the evening, Sir Charles appeared ſo thoughtful, abſent, and melancholy, averted his eyes from me, and ſighed ſo heavily, that my diſtreſs became unſupportable.

Maria!

Maria! is this the happineſs you promiſed your friend? this the reward of duty—the peace of virtue?—Oh! what then are the torments of guilt——

In continuation.

Maria! my friend! my comfortreſs! why are you not here to ſupport me?—Your friend is ſinking to the grave, and ſhe has none to pity her!—Ah! wretched Julia!—Moſt amiable, moſt injured Rivers, what, O what has Heaven in reſerve for thee?

Would my trembling hand obey my deſponding heart, I would unfold ſuch a ſcene!—But it will not, will not be—— The agonies I have ſuffered, during the laſt ſleepleſs night, are more than nature can ſupport.—Maria! my raſh credulity, my criminal gratitude, have undone me!

Mortimer, the generous, the compaſſionate Mortimer, will be involved in my ruin. He no longer inquires the cauſe of the miſery I vainly attempt to conceal. He regards me with pity; but, alas, he will ſoon ceaſe to regard me with love. Too ſurely he gueſſes the cauſe of my wretchedneſs. He ſees too plainly, that gratitude, not love, has been the ſource of my compliance; though, relying on my honour, he generouſly forbears to reproach me.—Alas, Maria! do I indeed merit reproach?—

I cannot ſupport this reſtraint—Life is become an intolerable burden.—I will open my heart to Sir Charles; the nobleneſs of his ſoul will animate and encourage me in conquering the fatal weakneſs of my own.—Farewell.—My thoughts are all diſtraction.—I have much to tell you, but can write no more——

LETTER

LETTER LXXIX.

Lady Mortimer to Miſs Herbert.

Harwood.

After finiſhing my laſt letter, nature being quite exhauſted, I threw myſelf on the bed. A torrent of tears relieved a little the oppreſſion of my heart, and after a while I fell into a profound ſleep.

Wholly occupied with the aſtoniſhing diſcovery I am about to reveal to you, my imagination preſented me with nothing but images of horror. Sometimes I beheld Rivers, ſtruggling amidſt the waves, imploring me earneſtly to come to his relief. Now I ſtood myſelf on the verge of ſome frightful precipice, from which an inviſible hand was impelling me into a dark and unfathomable abyſs. And then, amidſt ſcenes of horror and deſolation,

I was bathing with my tears the wounds of a bleeding husband, murdered by the rash hand of an impetuous and despairing lover.

In one of these distracting moments, I started from my sleep, crying,—Save me, O God! from guilt and ruin!

Some one grasped my hand with such violence, that I awoke. I looked wildly round, and beheld Sir Charles kneeling at the side of the bed, and gazing on me with a look of unutterable anguish. 'My Ju-'lia! my dearest, gentlest love,' said he, 'what can occasion these violent emo-'tions?' I could only answer with my tears. 'Indeed,' continued he, 'you must 'endeavour to restrain these wanderings 'of a disordered imagination. Your ten-'der frame is unable to sustain such into-'lerable pangs as those I have seen you 'suffer. Certainly something hangs on 'your

'your mind. My Julia! I would not di-
'ſtreſs you for the world: But ſurely you
'can, you ought to have no ſorrow, in
'which your faithful friend, your fond
'huſband, may not ſhare.'

I confeſs, Sir Charles, ſaid I, that ſome-thing has occurred which greatly afflicts me. When I am more able, I will give you the painful recital, though, even from you, were it poſſible, I would wiſh to con-ceal the crimes of a father. ——Ah! would to Heaven I had forever remained igno-rant of them!

To explain this, Maria, I muſt inform you, that an application was lately made to me by the children of a farmer near Harwood, for a will which had been en-truſted to my father, and which had not been found at the ſettling of his affairs. As my mother had received the keys of his cabinet at his death, and as it had ne-

ver

ver been opened ſince that time, I reſolved, for the ſake of theſe poor people, to make a thorough ſearch for the will. Having looked in vain in ſeveral drawers, I pulled out the largeſt, which contained a number of letters and papers, huddled together in great confuſion. Having found the will, I was about to lock up the reſt, without further examination, when the addreſs of a letter, in the well known hand of Rivers, caught my eye. It was to my father; and, under the ſame cover, were ſeveral addreſſed to myſelf, of various dates, and ſo much torn that only a few fragments remained entire.

Read them, Maria! and wonder at the compoſure of your friend. I no longer ſigh or weep; a deathlike torpor has ſeized every faculty. I ſeem to forget all the paſt; and even my feeling of the preſent is ſuſpended by my fearful preſages of future miſery.

Frag-

Fragment Firſt.

I have read over your laſt letter a thouſand times. Every word of it is imprinted on my heart, and diſſolves my ſoul in livelieſt gratitude. Never, Oh never may thoſe fountains of tenderneſs ceaſe to flow, which you ſay I have opened within your gentle boſom. Theſe, my love, are ſtreams of pleaſure, that will delight and refreſh, but never inebriate. Happy are they on whom Heaven hath beſtowed a taſte for ſuch pleaſures; and whoſe reliſh of them has never been impaired by the intoxicating allurements of luxury and vice!

To beguile the heavy hours, that are lengthened to an unmeaſurable extent, by fruitleſs wiſhes, and diſappointed hopes, I have recourſe to your letters. Several now lie ſpread before me, every ſentence of which diſplays ſome feature of that cha-

racter,

racter, whoſe gentle yet ſhining beauties have engaged every affection of my ſoul. For a moment I follow the guidance of fancy, which conducts me to the peaceful ſhades of Harwood, and ſhews me my Julia, with looks of ineffable tenderneſs, tracing thoſe lines which will ſoon convey tranſport to the boſom of her Rivers. At times you retire to the ſequeſtered ſpot, ſacred to love and friendſhip; you gaze with mournful complacency on the laurel I planted; you water it with your tears: Your mild eyes are now elevated to Heaven, and your breaſt heaves with an imploring ſigh, for the ſafety and happineſs of him you love. This ſweet illuſion affords a pleaſure that approaches neareſt to the delight your real preſence uſed to inſpire. Ah! when will the ſhort-lived deception be exchanged for the heavenly reality? When ſhall the bliſsful hour arrive, when no effort of imagination will be neceſſary to place your loved image before

before my eyes? when ſenſe will not prove an unwelcome intruder, nor, as now, diſappoint me of bliſs, which at preſent I can only enjoy by anticipation?

It is thus I ſpend the days I am conſtrained to waſte at a diſtance from you. I think no circumſtance too trivial, no ſcene too unintereſting, to communicate to you; conſcious that love renders all important. Follow my example, deareſt Julia! tell me, when you moſt anxiouſly think of me, moſt fondly fear for me, moſt ardently wiſh for me, moſt entirely love me!

Fragment Second.

Unkind Julia! Is it thus you remember your Rivers? I have watched on the beach for two days; two packets have arrived from Britain, but I have expected

my treaſure in vain. Surely mine are not fallacious dreams! In ſpite of all that prudence can ſuggeſt, and experience affirm, to moderate my hopes of complete happineſs on earth, I do, my Julia! I do expect to enjoy, in your loved ſociety, a felicity far ſuperior to the common lot of mortals; and, in being not only the witneſs but promoter of your's, to taſte a joy reſembling the ſweet benevolence of celeſtial ſpirits.

If theſe are romantic expectations, it is your unequalled merit that muſt juſtify my extravagance.

I have written three letters ſince your laſt arrived at New York. Julia! my love! I am diſtracted with my fears. Hitherto ſo punctual, to what can I attribute this delay? I will accuſe the winds or waves as the cauſe of my diſappointment;

you,

you, kindeſt, beſt of friends! you I never can——

Fragment Third.

——No, my diſtracted ſoul! it cannot, cannot be. Suppreſs thy vain, thy impious fears. Is ſhe not mine by honour, friendſhip, love? by the moſt ſacred and ſolemn of all enagements, that of the heart? What could ſhe propoſe in abandoning him ſhe loved? Would not remorſe and ſorrow be her portion?—No, her temperate mind knew not the rage for diſtinction or wealth. Love made all her wiſhes; love will alone make the happineſs of a ſoul ſo noble, ſo diſintereſted as her's.

Such, my Julia! are the reflections with which I ſoothe my afflicted heart, as often as the Britiſh enſigns appear, that bring joy to all but your Rivers! Ah, Julia! muſt diſappointment forever be my por-

tion? Muſt I forever languiſh in vain expectation of beholding again the lines traced by that dear hand?—Alas! at this moment, perhaps, arreſted by ſickneſs, by death!———

Fragment Fourth.

I ſtruggle in vain to ſhut my eyes to the truth. No longer can I be blind to your falſehood, or my own miſery. Julia! is it poſſible! is Rivers, an exile from his country, become an alien too from your heart? What then remains to ſupport life?

Two years, two lingering joyleſs years have elapſed, ſince I beheld her on whom my ſoul repoſed, for ſmoothing the horrors of war, binding up my bleeding wounds, perhaps receiving my laſt ſigh, which

which I ſhall breathe out in prayers for her happineſs!

During the courſe of days and nights, ſpent in ſevereſt hardſhips, and unremitting toils, what has ſupported your Rivers, but the fond, the faithleſs hope, of returning with honour and fame to you, and to his country; to look back with exulting affection on dangers encountered for your ſake, and endeared by your tenderneſs!—Farewell, deceitful proſpects—too fondly indulged, too ardently deſired—farewell!

Yet think—Oh timely think, though you ſhould not be mine, you cannot with honour be the wife of another. You may be enriched, ennobled, but you never can be happy. That heart of your's is not formed to reliſh the empty glare of life. Julia! miſguided maid! you have miſerably miſtaken the road to happineſs——Perhaps it is not yet too late——Julia!

reflect on the anguish you are inflicting on him you loved——What have I done to deserve it? O let not a father's blind ambition ——

Letter to Mr Greville.

—You say true, Sir; I certainly have no right to controul your daughter's inclinations, nor oppose her establishment in the world; especially as you assure me her marriage with Lord Rochdale is entirely her own free choice. I confess it would have been satisfactory to have received this information from herself; but, as her late conduct leaves me no room to question the reality of her present determination, I have nothing left but to acquiesce in a resolution which you say is unalterable.

May

May Miſs Greville enjoy all the happineſs in this union which ſhe can hope to derive from wealth and grandeur; and may that happineſs never be interrupted by reflecting on the part ſhe has acted towards the much injured

GEORGE RIVERS.

Maria! can you read theſe letters, and yet believe that I am alive? that I ſtill breathe, and think, and write?

I know not what is the matter, but I really think I have felt ſo much, I can feel no more. An icy coldneſs creeps through my veins; I am ſeized at times with ſhiverings; my pulſes throb ſo violently, that I hear them on my pillow. I got up to write, but cannot hold the pen. Maria! the hour perhaps approaches—I know not what I would ſay—perhaps I ſhall ſoon be well. Maria! my friend! farewell. Remember in your prayers your afflicted Julia, who is incapable of praying for herſelf.

LETTER

LETTER LXXX.

Sir Charles Mortimer to Mr Belford.

Harwood.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It is the laſt wretched reſource of the jealous, to ſeek relief in the confirmation of thoſe very facts, from the bare ſuſpicion of which all their miſery ariſes.

Though you may conceive the torment of that ſuſpenſe in which I have been held ſince Thurſday, you know me too well to believe, that to rid myſelf even of that diſtracting uncertainty, I could be guilty of a mean or diſhonourable action. Alas, my friend! I am no longer doubtful or uncertain. Conviction, fatal conviction, has reached me, and overwhelmed in ruin all my gay proſpects of happineſs.

Oh,

Oh, Julia! by what fatality have we been condemned to purſue virtue, and, inſtead of felicity, obtain only diſappointment; to wiſh each other's happineſs, and yet render each other completely miſerable!

Belford! it is now palpable! I have cruelly deceived myſelf; I have never poſſeſſed the heart of my wife, whoſe virtues increaſe my eſteem and admiration, at the very inſtant when I learn that my misfortune is without remedy; that I can never hope to obtain her love.

This morning, after giving ſome orders to my work people, I returned to the breakfaſting parlour, with a deſign of reading to Lady Mortimer Miſs Seyward's beautiful poem of Louiſa, which ſhe had never ſeen. But, not finding her there, I went up to her dreſſing-room, in which there

there is a book-closet, where she usually spends an hour after breakfast.

The door being open, I entered, and throwing myself down on a sofa, resolved to wait for her return.

Soon after, I heard Julia speaking to a country-woman, who followed her into the dressing-room, and whom I supposed to be one of her numerous pensioners. Being engaged with a book, I paid no regard to the conversation, which I was prevented from hearing distinctly, by the door of the closet being almost shut. Not long did I remain in this state of indifference : My attention was suddenly roused, by the dreaded name of Rivers, pronounced with a faultering voice by Lady Mortimer, who was talking to his nurse. My first impulse was instantly to quit the closet, but reflecting how greatly my appearance at that

that moment must surprise my unhappy wife, I resolved to continue where I was.

My confusion was too great to allow of my attending distinctly to what passed. It was sufficient to convince me, that the anguish of my Julia's mind is not inferior to that which she has innocently inflicted on her wretched husband.

After talking to nurse some time, 'Indeed,' replied she, 'your La'ship may 'believe me, nothing was farther from 'my thoughts than to offend you; but 'how could I think you would be 'angry for putting you in mind of old 'stories, and how much young master 'loves you.'

You mistake me, answered Lady Mortimer, you have not offended me; but I wish to make you understand that it is not pru-

prudent to mention theſe things before my huſband.

'I'm ſure, pleaſe your La'ſhip, had I 'known the gentleman was your huſband, 'I would have been burnt ſooner than ut-'ter a word of the matter, and neither 'will I again, even though young maſter 'himſelf ſhould aſk me.'

How, nurſe, demanded Lady Mortimer in great agitation, did you ever mention this ſubject to Lord Rivers?

'Why, your La'ſhip knows,' anſwered ſhe, in ſome confuſion, 'I could not tell 'a lie, when he came on Thurſday, 'and aſked me if your La'ſhip had met 'with any miſhap, as he had ſeen Sir 'Charles and the chariot ſtanding at the 'door?'

And

And pray what did you tell him, haſtily demanded Lady Mortimer?

'Why nothing at all, but that your La'-'ſhip ſeemed very poorly, and forbade me 'to talk of him, and former days; and 'was all in a tremble when I mentioned 'his having lifted you out of the water; 'and as how you ſaid theſe things were 'all over now, and you was married, and 'bid me ſay nothing more about them.'

After a deep ſigh, and a pauſe of ſome minutes, 'Nurſe,' ſaid Lady Mortimer, in a weak voice, 'I beg you'll be very at-'tentive to what I am going to ſay. The 'only reaſon of my aſking you theſe que-'ſtions, was, my fear leſt your impru-'dence might involve Lord Rivers and 'my huſband in a quarrel. It would be 'very improper that the world ſhould 'know any of theſe circumſtances you 'have juſt told me; let me therefore have

'your promiſe, that you will never open 'your lips on this ſubject to any creature, 'unleſs you could bear to ſee me made 'miſerable.'

'Heaven forbid!' exclaimed the good creature; 'I will not only give your La'-'ſhip my word, but my Bible oath, ne-'ver to utter a ſyllable of the matter; no 'not to my own huſband, thof he can 'keep a ſecret as well as either Lord or 'Lady.'

After this, Lady Mortimer remained ſome minutes alone in the dreſſing-room, and gave way to the moſt extreme affliction. Mine was cruelly aggravated by the impoſſibility of alleviating her's.

At length ſhe retired, and I returned to my own apartment, in a ſtate of mind hardly to be conceived. To avoid the neceſſity of ſeeing her ſuffer affliction, that will

will only be increaſed by my preſence, I ſhall ſet out inſtantly for R—, on pretence of buſineſs, which will detain me till the evening. To-morrow I ſhall deſpatch this.——Oh Heaven! what hope, what relief, can to-morrow bring to your wretched friend,

CHARLES MORTIMER?

In Continuation.

I did not return till ten laſt night. I found Julia in bed, and very much indiſpoſed. She wiſhed me to retire to another apartment, leſt ſhe ſhould diſturb me. I was alarmed by the tremor in her voice, and could not bear to leave her in ſuch a ſituation. After a night paſſed in greater diſtreſs than I can deſcribe, which was augmented by the conſciouſneſs that ſleep was as much a ſtranger to my afflicted partner as to myſelf, I aroſe, and having

begged her to lie quiet for ſome time, if poſſible, to obtain that reſt of which ſhe ſtands in great need, I am ſet down to pour out to you thoſe griefs which I feel inſupportable. O Belford! what can I do for the relief of my ſuffering, my moſt deſerving wife? I could bear my own, but her diſtreſs perfectly unmans me.

Rivers muſt ſoon return to America. He is young and amiable: Some other object may efface from his heart that paſſion, which now to cheriſh would be criminal. From time, from abſence, much may be expected. In him inconſtancy would be a virtue.

But, Julia! moſt admired, moſt unhappy, what remains for thee? What can the moſt tender aſſiduity, of the moſt affectionate huſband, do more, than add to all thy cruel ſufferings, the anguiſh of ſelf-reproach. Heaven only knows how I love,

how

how I pity, thee; how far, how very far, my heart, which is almoſt burſting, is from reproaching thee!

A meſſage is this moment brought me; Lady Mortimer got up to write. She was ſeized with fainting fits, is put to bed very ill, and deſires to ſee me without a moment's delay. My God! what will become of me?

LETTER LXXXI.

To Miſs Herbert, from Lady Mortimer's Maid.

Harwood.

Sir Charles bids me inform you, honoured Madam, that my beloved miſtreſs is very ill. I have delayed acquainting you with her dangerous ſituation from day to day, in expectation of her being better; but, alas, ſhe grows worſe and worſe every hour. I know not which you would pity moſt, my maſter or miſtreſs. He neither eats nor ſleeps, never ſtirs from her bed-

ſide, and is quite inconſolable. The phyſicians ſay my Lady has juſt one chance for life. Ah, Madam! them that are gone have much to anſwer for.

As my Lady left her laſt letter on her writing table, and ſhe was unable to get up to finiſh it, ſhe deſired me to fold it, and addreſs it to you. It was all wet with her tears. Will you, dear Madam, forgive the preſumption of the ſervant that loves her as her own life? I did look into the letter, for I ſaw my Lady's great affliction, and well did I gueſs the cauſe; for I knew the love young Lord Rivers and ſhe bore each other long ago; and many a ſalt tear I have wept for my beloved miſtreſs, when I thought he was never to return. Oh, Madam! it would have been better now for all parties if he never had.

Cloſe by the letter lay this paper, which I think ſafeſt to incloſe to you, dear Madam, as I am ſure my beloved miſtreſs would

would not chooſe any one to ſee it, and nobody can tell into whoſe hands it might fall. If it pleaſe Heaven to reſtore her, ſuch things would only ſerve to renew her grief; and perhaps ſhe may not recollect her having written it, as the fever had greatly diſordered her head, before ſhe was carried to bed.

'Retired from the hurry of the world, 'to theſe quiet moments, when 'the ſoul "calls itſelf to account, and gives itſelf au- "dience amidſt the ſilence of the paſſions,' 'I find myſelf ſtanding on the brink of an 'immenſe abyſs, into which one fatal ſtep 'may plunge me, and leave me in a ſtate 'of wretchedneſs, of which I cannot even 'form an idea, and from which all hope 'of relief is cut off forever!

'Great God! whom in ſincerity I have 'endeavoured to obey, pity, ſtrengthen, 'and direct me!

'In

'In one moment of madneſs, ſhall all 'the mercy of Heaven be forgotten, all 'my ſacred engagements renounced, the 'happineſs and honour of my faithful con- 'fiding huſband betrayed, my peace ruin- 'ed, my enjoyment of this life poiſoned, 'my hopes of a better utterly deſtroyed! '——And for what would I quit the 'path of rectitude, the ſweet conſciouſneſs 'of innocence, the approving ſmiles of the 'world, the honeſt joy of a fair fame? to 'forfeit, in one guilty moment, the eſteem 'of a huſband to whom I owe the ſtrong- 'eſt obligations of duty and gratitude; to 'requite his confidence, by the violation 'of his and my own honour; to renounce 'all title to the reſpect, even of the man 'whoſe love I ſhould pretend to reward, 'by this dreadful ſacrifice; to take from 'the beſt of human paſſions every ami- 'able and reſpectable quality; and to 'deſcend to a level with the meaneſt of 'the human race. To ſee every brow cloud- 'ed at my approach, every eye averted 'from

'from mine, and the tongue silent with 'shame, that wont to be loudest in my 'praise!

'Forbid, O heavenly Father! forbid 'the guilty thought. Let not imagina- 'tion presume to enter these unhallowed 'paths! Recall me by thy powerful voice! 'Restore me to thy favour! Oh restore 'me to reason, to duty, to myself!'——

Friday morning.

Indeed, dear Madam, my heart will break; the fever increases, and Sir Charles seems stupified with grief. My Lady is often carried, especially when she first goes to sleep, and very little of that she has. James and I prevailed on my poor master to retire a while, and go to bed in another room last night. My Lady opened the curtain, and seeing nobody but me, 'Where 'is Sir Charles, Sally?' said she, in a low voice. 'Are you sure my father will not 'destroy him too?' I closed the curtain, in hopes

hopes ſhe would go to reſt; but ſhe ſtarted every moment; and at one time cried ſo loud, that Sir Charles heard her, and came haſtily into the room, looking as pale as death. When ſhe ſaw him, ſhe ſtretched out her arms, and folding them round his neck, 'O! come, come, my 'deareſt huſband,' ſaid ſhe, 'you muſt not 'leave me: Though I have not loved you 'as I ought, I will love no one elſe any 'more.' He ſeated himſelf on the bed, held her burning hands in his, made a ſign for me to ſit down at a little diſtance, and ſtrove to compoſe my dear Lady to reſt. She often dropt aſleep for five minutes, but always awaked delirious.

About midnight I heard her ſay, 'Tell 'me not that I am guiltleſs! is not my ſoul 'contaminated? Did not my lips profane 'the ſacred indiſſoluble vow, when I pro-'miſed to love one, while another had my 'heart?' Then, after a long pauſe, 'Yet 'Heaven is my witneſs! I would not hurt my

'my huſband—I pity thee Rivers—I once 'could do more,—but theſe times are 'gone, gone forever!'

At another time, 'O do not frown, my 'love—you ought rather to pity. I cannot 'bear your anger; I will not again do any 'thing to deſerve it.—Indeed, Sir Charles, 'I wiſh never to behold the unfortunate, 'abuſed, deceived Rivers: But your gentle 'heart would compaſſionate him, did you 'know all!'

After this, ſhe fell into a profound ſleep, in which ſhe continued for more than two hours; then awaked with theſe words, which, without any ſigns of diſorder or confuſion, ſhe pronounced in a low and diſtinct voice. 'My God! I thank thee, 'who haſt opened my eyes to behold my 'danger, and given me ſtrength to fly 'from it! Oh never let this heart, which

'reveres

'reveres thy laws, wander from thee or 'virtue more!'

After another ſoft ſlumber, ſhe became quite compoſed, took a little ſuſtenance from Sir Charles, and ſeeing him greatly affected whilſt ſupporting her in his arms, ſhe leant her head on his boſom, and raiſing her mild eyes, ſwimming in tears, ſhe fixed them on him, with the look of a benignant angel: 'Pardon, Sir Charles,' ſaid ſhe, 'Oh pardon all the grief, the trouble 'I have given you! my life! my huſband! 'Heaven has reſtored me to your prayers; 'I will yet live to be grateful for all your 'goodneſs, and (I humbly truſt) to make 'you truly happy!'

Never, Madam, did I witneſs ſo affecting a ſcene. Sir Charles gazed on her with ſomething more than admiration, with reverence, and idolizing affection. And, after thanking God for her ſafety,

and

and preſſing her to his heart, Be compoſed, be well, my Julia, ſaid he, and I ſhall be completely bleſt. The continuance of your health would only have made us contented; the reſtoration of it will make us happy!

I will now ſend my letter away, becauſe I can with truth aſſure you, Madam, that my Lady is certainly out of danger. Sir Charles will hardly credit the phyſicians, whilſt all the ſervants are half crazy with joy. For my part, I am now as ſick with happineſs as I was with ſorrow. May Heaven long continue her precious life. Though it ſeems ungenerous to wiſh the delay of a change of infinite advantage to her; yet ſurely, dear Madam, as our good old James obſerves, her bliſs is not delayed by her recovery, ſince Heaven muſt inhabit ſuch a ſoul as her's. Again craving your forgiveneſs for my preſumption, and

all the errors of this hurried letter, I subscribe myself, with becoming respect,

Madam,

Your most humble,

Obedient servant,

SALLY DORMER.

LETTER LXXXII.

From the same.

MADAM,

Harwood.

I think myself highly honoured by the few lines you sent me, and, agreeably to your desire, take up my pen to assure you, that Lady Mortimer, though still very weak, is free from all complaints; and, notwithstanding her late danger, the physicians say, that the event they dreaded will not now happen, if great care is taken to keep her quiet. Sure I am, dear Madam,

dam, were my Lady Queen of Great Britain, ſhe could not be better attended, or get more preſcriptions. Every one thinks it a privilege to be near her, and would fly to ſerve her; but Sir Charles will not permit her to take any thing, except out of his own hand.

You would be delighted, dear Madam, for the love you bear my miſtreſs, to ſee how ſhe is beloved by all the gentry round. John has got a liſt of names, two yards long, of people who ſent here every day to inquire after her. But that name is not down which ſhould be oftenеſt there. For, though Lord Cleveland, and the ſweet young Ladies, ſent twice every day, Lord Rivers came every evening, in the duſk, to the alcove at the bottom of the garden, and ſent for me, and made me tell him every circumſtance about my Lady. And yet I did not tell him all neither; for I was ſo frightened, when he aſked me if

ever ſhe mentioned his name, that I begged him, for Heaven's ſake, not to aſk me any more queſtions. I never ſaw grief equal to his. I am ſure my heart bleeds for him more than ever. Ah Madam! did he know all!—but that he never muſt.

My Lady and Sir Charles comfort each other, and really ſeem quite happy; but poor Lord Rivers has none to comfort him. 'Sally,' ſaid he laſt night, with a heavy ſigh, 'I ſhall not come here any 'more; it might diſpleaſe your miſtreſs; 'therefore do not mention to her my ha-'ving been here at all.'

I promiſed, and would have kept my word; but my Lady, when there was no one elſe in the room, aſked me to read over the names. When I was done, 'Is 'there no one beſides, Sally?' ſaid ſhe. I knew what my Lady meant, and could not bear that ſhe ſhould think herſelf neglected by

by one who was once so dear to her; so I even told her all the truth. She made me weep with her goodness.

'Sally,' said she, 'we were brought up 'together, and you have ever been more 'like my sister than servant. You know 'that my affections were once another's; 'but they are now immoveably fixed 'where they ought to be, on the kindest 'of husbands, and the most generous of 'men. I pity Lord Rivers with my 'whole heart; we were both cruelly de-'ceived; but may both be much happier 'in the disappointment, than we should 'perhaps have been in the completion of 'our wishes. The near prospect of ano-'ther world, my good girl, set all the con-'cerns of this in a new and striking light; 'and even convinced me, that such a de-'gree of happiness, as would tend too 'strongly to attach us to earth, by banish-'ing from our thoughts our future desti-

'nation, would in the end be productive 'of miſery. Let us remember, that each 'day is a ſtep advanced in the ſhort jour-'ney of life, and ſtrive to act that part 'now, which we ſhall wiſh to have acted, 'when we reach its cloſe.'

I am ſure, Madam, if ever there was a ſaint on earth, ſhe is one; and I always feared moſt, when I thought of all her good deeds; for ſuch people are oftenest taken away, from this bad world, to that heaven where only they can be ſafe and happy. My dear Lady bids me ſay, that ſhe will ſoon write to you herſelf; but I fancy ſhe muſt aſk Sir Charles's leave firſt; for he is ſo much afraid of her relapſing, that he hardly ever leaves her. I am,

Madam,

Your very reſpectful,

Humble ſervant,

SALLY DORMER.

LETTER

LETTER LXXXIII.

Lord Rivers to Captain Stanley.

I confeſs, Stanley, you have cauſe to reproach, but far more to pity me. This ſickening apathy renders every exertion painful, and every employment burdenſome. Of what can I write? of what inquire? What now, in this world, can excite one deſire in that breaſt which grief and deſpair entirely poſſeſs? Oh, my friend! how inſupportable is the load of life, when not one hope remains to lighten the intolerable burden!

The bitterneſs of ſelf-reproach is now added to the anguiſh of diſappointment. To inflict unneceſſary pain, on whatever pretence, is ungenerous. I ought to have ſhunned Lady Mortimer, convinced as I was,

was, that ſhe could not behold, without extreme uneaſineſs, a perſon ſhe had ſo greatly injured.

Stanley! I know not what to think! The violent agitation ſhe betrayed at our laſt interview, and the long and dangerous illneſs by which it was ſucceeded, convince me that ſhe is ſtill far from being indifferent, and that the reſentment ſhe ſo ſtrongly expreſſed, was occaſioned rather by grief than contempt.

The reproaches ſhe then made me dwell forever on my mind. In vain I ſtrive to comprehend their myſterious meaning. Unhappy Julia! how has one error altered thy whole character! Is it not ſufficient to be unkind and faithleſs! Muſt you be alſo ſevere and unjuſt!

I ſhall ſoon bid her and England an eternal adieu. Yet, ere I go, it would afford

ford me ſome ſmall conſolation, to learn from her own lips the cauſe of her ſtrange conduct. Alas, my friend! even this poor conſolation will, I fear, be denied. After expreſsly prohibiting me from writing, after flying from me at the very moment when chance preſented her with an opportunity of trying to excuſe, to vindicate herſelf, what hope remains that ſhe will ever condeſcend to do ſo? My friend! her actions cannot bear an explanation. Her marriage with Sir Charles Mortimer is a ſtronger proof of the natural, the aſtoniſhing levity of her diſpoſition, than even that with Lord Rochdale could have been of her avarice.

Would to Heaven that I could obliterate all remembrance of her former affection, by that of her inconſtancy; and tear from my heart an image which is utterly unworthy to poſſeſs it.

Like

Like a forlorn wretch, I ſtill linger near the ſcenes, where my happineſs lies buried.

It ſhall not long be ſo. Though I cannot hope to recover my own peace, my preſence ſhall not interrupt her's; nor will I, by a conduct ſo unmanly, forfeit your friendſhip,—the only good on earth I prize.

I will embark for America in the very firſt Tranſports; and, ſince life can no longer be enjoyed, ſeek relief in an honourable death. I can never wiſh even to regain Lady Mortimer's affections; but, O Stanley! I ſtill wiſh to preſerve her eſteem, and to force her to regret him whom ſhe has voluntarily abandoned. Farewell.

GEORGE RIVERS.

LETTER

LETTER LXXXIV.

Lady Mortimer to Miſs Herbert.

Harwood.

With weak eyes, and a feeble hand, I once more take up my pen, to thank the kindeſt, beſt of friends, for all thoſe expreſſions of ſympathy and tenderneſs that have ſoothed and conſoled my heart in the hours of extreme affliction, and during a tedious and alarming illneſs. Ah, Maria! in what a light does my former weakneſs now appear! While ſtanding on the very confines of the unſeen world, how vain ſeem the cares, how tranſient the ſufferings, how empty the pleaſures, how criminal the frailties, connected with our preſent ſtate! Hardly dare I truſt myſelf to look back to that giddy height, from which my tortured imagination recoils appalled, and from which my criminal paſſion

paſſion ſeemed ready to precipitate me. Hardly dare I recollect the horrors that ſeized my mind, when I thought myſelf about to appear in the preſence of immaculate purity. Thoſe errors which I had pardoned as involuntary weakneſs, appeared at that awful criſis little leſs than premeditated crimes. My ingratitude to the huſband, whoſe whole care was to render me happy, whoſe whole happineſs depended on my affection;—my guilt, in nouriſhing a criminal preference, which I ſhuddered to avow, which I never could indulge, without the certainty of miſery and ruin; the danger of loſing the eſteem of my huſband, of deſtroying my peace, of forfeiting the favour of Heaven; theſe, theſe, Maria! pierced my ſoul with anguiſh, and even overturned my feeble reaſon.

From this deplorable depth of darkneſs and woe, the hand of the Almighty hath been

been ſtretched out to ſave me. Whilſt I ſhudder at the recollection of my late danger, I thankfully acknowledge my deliverance; and humbly and ardently pray, that God may confirm my reſolutions for virtue, and eſtabliſh my feet in thoſe paths that are at once pleaſantneſs and peace.

The firſt ſtep towards my ſecurity ſhall be that of laying open my heart to my huſband. Thank Heaven, I entertain not one thought there but what he may behold without uneaſineſs, and even with pleaſure. I know the nobleneſs of his ſoul; his approbation will envigorate my reſolution, and animate my perſeverance; his confirmed eſteem will teach me to reſpect myſelf. The next ſhall be that of writing to the amiable unfortunate Rivers. Sometimes I have thought of ſeeing him; but I am ſo very weak, and eaſily agitated, that I dare not hazard an interview. Sir Charles watches every movement,

ſhuns every affecting ſubject, and the care with which he avoids the one at preſent moſt intereſting to my heart, ſhews too plainly how deep an impreſſion it has made on his own. How noble is his conduct, how ſingular his delicacy, how unequalled his tenderneſs! But I hear his foot on the ſtairs, and muſt haſtily fold this up, that he may not ſee how much I have written. Your

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER LXXXV.

Lady Mortimer to Miſs Herbert.

Harwood.

At length the affecting interview is over, the confeſſion made, and the criminal abſolved! O more, far more, Maria! admired, praiſed, endeared, to the heart of the

the generous huſband, who too fondly doats on her.

Yes, Maria! it is with truth moraliſts affirm that virtue is its own reward. If the practice of virtue will not enſure complete happineſs, in a ſtate intended for diſcipline, it will at leaſt ſupply a ſtore of ſelf-approving reflections, from which the mind may derive peace and conſolation, even in its ſaddeſt hour.

Conſcious that I have acted right in flying from Rivers, in reſolving never to ſee him more, in ſtriving to do juſtice to the ſuperior worth and boundleſs affection of my huſband, my ſoul has attained a heavenly quiet, which nothing, I truſt, will again interrupt.

For ſeveral days paſt, Sir Charles has carried me out a little way in the phaeton; and, as the roads cut through the woods

are remarkably ſmooth, and the weather ſtill clear and dry, I have gained ſurpriſingly ſince I began theſe little excurſions.

Laſt night, Sir Charles aſked me, whether I had no curioſity to try my ſtrength in a ſhort walk, and propoſed going the length of the alcove. I was ſurpriſed, on reaching it, to find it adorned with ſome pretty landſcapes from the adjacent country, which you know is beautiful; and ſtill more ſo, when Sir Charles aroſe, and preſſing a little ſpring in the wall, a door flew open, and diſcovered a ſmall mahogany deſk, with ſhelves, on which were arranged an elegant aſſortment of books. 'Here, my Julia,' ſaid he, 'when you tire 'of your own thoughts, you may amuſe 'yourſelf with thoſe of your friends and 'favourites: There is only one receſs 'here,' continued he, 'the power of which 'I ſhall hold as diſcretionary: My love 'muſt

'muſt not dwell too much on affecting 'ſcenes, and melancholy objects.' I looked ſurpriſed, when Sir Charles, to avoid ſtartling me, told me he had ordered my mother's portrait, which hung in the drawing-room, to be brought here, and placed with a curtain before it, in another receſs, of which he preſented me the key. This inſtance of delicate attention quite charmed me; I gave way to the firſt grateful impulſe of my heart, and wept the thanks I could not ſpeak. Reſolved on my confeſſion, this ſeemed a favourable moment; but my heart throbbed with ſuch violence, that I could not articulate a ſingle word.

Whether Sir Charles gueſſed my deſign I know not; but he inſtantly aroſe, and preſenting me his arm, told me I muſt not ſtay too long, for fear of the damps, and conducted me home.

This evening, the weather being remarkably fine, after a ſoft ſhower, I ſtrolled down the honeyſuckle walk. There was a ſolemn ſtillneſs in the air, which was perfectly in uniſon with the tone of my mind. I was regaled with odours from the birch and ſweet briar, and liſtened with delight to the notes of a thruſh, who ſeemed to linger in the ſhade after all his companions, in order to ſerenade me. By the time I reached the lake, the whole ſky was in a glow, and the fantaſtic forms of the broken clouds were reflected from its ſurface, with a beauty above all deſcription. I ſat down to contemplate the laſt trembling rays of the ſun, which now gilded the wood, and to liſten to 'the 'drowſy tinklings of the diſtant folds.'

The ſober twilight that ſucceeded, ſuited the languor of my ſpirits. My thoughts were wrapt in contemplation, and my mind ſoothed to a degree of melancholy tran-

tranquility, when I was roufed by the voice of my hufband. He approached, and taking hold of my hand, gently chid me for going out alone. " Ah, Sir Charles!" faid I, " I have need fometimes to retire —to reflect—to think of what is paft—my folly—my ingratitude—this is a facrifice due to Heaven—to you—beft and deareft" ——here my weak fpirits entirely forfook me, and I fell motionlefs into the arms of my hufband.

He preffed me to his bofom. " My Julia, my life," faid he, " do not pain my heart; do not talk at prefent of what too much agitates your's. O be aflured, my love, I know the rectitude, the fpotlefs purity of that heart—I am even confident that I now poffefs its undivided affection. —Let us quit the fubject, my Julia, let us return home." " Oh never, never," repeated I, covering my face with my handkerchief, " till I have opened to you its

moft

moſt ſecret receſs, and ſhewn you all its weakneſs."

"My exalted angel," interrupted he, "its weakneſs has been virtue, humanity, compaſſion! But what have been its noble ſtruggles! how admirable the fortitude! how glorious the conqueſt!" A ſhower of tears having ſomewhat relieved me, I entreated Sir Charles, in the moſt earneſt manner, to liſten to me a few minutes. I then briefly communicated the particulars of my firſt meeting, and early attachment to Rivers; the fatal diſcovery of the letters, my ſubſequent diſtreſs, and the unalterable reſolution I had formed, of never again beholding him; and ended with my intention of writing immediately to Rivers, and making the ſame confeſſion to him, as the ſtrongeſt proof I could give, that my friendſhip and eſteem for him were increaſed, whilſt my love was no more.

"Julia!"

"Julia!" ſaid he, gazing on me with the moſt melting tenderneſs, "you was ever admired, ever eſteemed;—you, you only know how ardently beloved! But where is the language that can expreſs the admiration, the delight, the ſacred enthuſiaſm, with which I now look up to your exalted virtues! Yes, moſt admirable, moſt ingenuous of your ſex, I regard you not only as my heart's choſen friend and companion through the various journey of life, but as a benignant angel ſent to conduct me to thoſe manſions of purity and peace, where our joys ſhall know no interruption, our felicity no end."

I aroſe, and opening the receſs, and drawing back the curtain, "If thou, beloved parent," ſaid I, "art a preſent, though inviſible, witneſs of the felicity of thy child, how muſt thy heart expand, even to rapture, to behold her ſnatched from perdition, by the remembrance of thy

thy early inſtructions, and confirmed in virtue, by that of thy blameleſs life!" Then kneeling, and raiſing my claſped hands to Heaven, "Do thou, O Omniſcient! witneſs of my inmoſt thoughts, behold with compaſſion the ſincerity of my contrition, and aſſiſt the reſolutions now formed in thy ſight."

The tears of my huſband accompanied mine, and for ſome moments he remained loſt in ſilent aſtoniſhment. He raiſed me from the ground, claſped me to his boſom, and entreated me, in the moſt earneſt manner, to return home, and never again endanger myſelf by ſuch agitating ſcenes. But, indeed, Maria, his fears are groundleſs; the burden which this converſation has removed from my mind, has not only reſtored me to peace, but chearfulneſs. It is only clouded by the doubtfulneſs I feel with reſpect to the manner in which I ought to addreſs the unhappy Rivers.

Per-

Perhaps it might tend moſt effectually to extirpate the remains of his ill-fated paſſion, were I to leave him in his error with reſpect to my conduct. But, if he is the noble, the generous Rivers I once knew him, he would rather ſuffer the exquiſite pangs of hopeleſs, unavailing regret, which the diſcovery of my innocence muſt occaſion, than continue, as now, to believe me guilty, and be forced to deſpiſe the object of his once tender eſteem and affection.

I have repeatedly written and blotted, and ſtill feel my ſpirits ſo unequal to the taſk, that I muſt delay it till a night's ſleep has reſtored them.

Good night, my friend; may Heaven watch over your ſlumbers, and may you awake to that ſweet contentment and tranquility which is the portion of virtue, and the companion of innocence.

JULIA MORTIMER.

Lady

Lady Mortimer to Lord Rivers.

" After ſhunning you with ſo much care, after ſuffering ſuch pain in your preſence, after being reduced to the borders of the grave, by the ſight of your diſtreſs, you, my Lord, can be at no loſs to gueſs the cauſe of my behaviour. It muſt have convinced you that you ſtill held too dear a place in a heart, which duty, honour, gratitude, had forever devoted to another.

" Miſled by circumſtances too painful to be enumerated, I believed you inconſtant, ungrateful, perfidious. I believed it my duty to drive you from my heart, and to beſtow my hand on another. Alas! we were both cruelly deceived. Heaven, in mercy, hath brought me to the verge of the grave, that at the awful moment of approaching diſſolution, when the voice of conſcience is heard, and that of the paſſions

ſions is ſilent, I might ſee the baſeneſs, the danger of harbouring a ſentiment in my boſom which was treaſonable to the beſt of huſbands, and which, till that moment, I never had conquered, becauſe, till that moment, I never had ſeriouſly reſolved, and vigorouſly endeavoured to do ſo.

" I make you this confeſſion, my Lord, without reſerve, though not without ſhame. At the altar, I vowed that honour and obedience to Sir Charles Mortimer, which it is the pleaſure of my life to pay; but I did more; I vowed that love, which I was conſcious I had not to beſtow. That love is now added to my confirmed eſteem and tender gratitude, for a conduct influenced by every principle that can exalt and endear the human character. He has long loved your's. It is with his perfect approbation I now make you this confeſſion. If the tender friendſhip of two perſons to whom you are unſpeakably dear, can con-

ſole you for a diſappointment, of the bitterneſs of which they are both qualified to judge, you may be comforted. And, if any ſpark ſhould remain of that love you once bore me, let the ſacred flame be converted into friendſhip, conſecrated to honour, and fed by the generous joy of beholding me truly happy."

This letter, my dear Maria, I ſent by James three days ago, with orders that it ſhould be delivered into the hands of Lord Rivers. I have received no anſwer; but had the mortification of hearing from Lady Sophia, who called here this morning, that her brother has been ſo ill as to keep his chamber. Moſt amiable, ill-fated Rivers! how my heart bleeds for thy diſtreſs! His gentle ſiſter would not be abſent from him to day, but ſays, if he is better to-

morrow,

morrow, ſhe will come and ſpend the day with me. Never have I met with more prepoſſeſſing modeſty and ſweetneſs than are expreſſed in the countenance and manners of this young Lady; ſhe ſeems to regard me too with that flattering preference which makes itſelf known to the heart, without the aid of language.

The conſtant endeavours of my huſband to render me happy, produce all the effects he wiſhes, and diffuſe through my ſoul, now freed from reſtraint and apprehenſion, a ſerene tranquility, which the ſweet ſcenes and quiet of the country ſerve daily to confirm. Sir Charles, too, has regained all his natural chearfulneſs. Indeed, his tenderneſs for me ſeems to increaſe in proportion to the efforts I make to deſerve it. Every inſtance of complaiſance, every obliging expreſſion, or look of affection, he receives with marks of ſuch lively ſenſibility, as leads me to

beſtow more tenderneſs on him, than I ever thought it poſſible I could feel, far leſs expreſs. He ſcarcely ever leaves me alone; reads ſuch books as he thinks will amuſe and intereſt me; occupies me in making improvements on the houſe and gardens; and carries me to viſit the cottagers, that I may enjoy the moſt refined luxury, that of relieving the diſtreſſes, rewarding the induſtrious, and promoting the comfort and proſperity of all around me.

This morning we ſet out in the phaeton as uſual. After conducting me into the thickeſt part of the wood, on finding the carriage could go no farther, Sir Charles ſtopped, and alighting, aſked me, ſmiling, "if I would truſt myſelf with him in the Cave of the Enchanter?" "With all my heart," I replied; and giving him my hand, told him, "That, as I flattered myſelf I had now forever ſecured him in my toils,

toils, I would truſt myſelf with him in any part of the globe."

Having committed the reins to James, and deſired him to drive the horſes gently about till we ſhould return, he conducted me, by a narrow winding path, down a bank ſo dark with hazel and oak trees, that I felt a pleaſing ſort of horror thrill through my nerves. I ſtopped to contemplate this ſcene, which was quite new to me. Sir Charles beheld my ſurpriſe with marks of lively ſatisfaction. "Do not be afraid to follow me, Julia," ſaid he; "Truſt me, I would not hurt you if I could; and you have nothing to fear from the machinations of a Merlin himſelf, whilſt ſurrounded with the arms of your huſband."

By this time we reached a ſmall cavern, which opened into a grotto, the Gothic windows of which overlooked the river,

that ruſhed over the broken rocks with the moſt ſoothing murmur.

Nature, my dear Maria, has beſtowed on this favoured ſpot her wildeſt, moſt touching beauties. How preferable are ſuch to the expenſive labours of art? That taſte muſt be vitiated in a great degree, that can prefer an imitation to an original. In fact, our moſt elegant improvements only deſerve that name, when they artfully mimic their ſublime pattern. To tranſplant ſome of the graces of the highly poliſhed, to the rude uncultivated ſcene, and ſkilfully to contraſt her bold and ſublime with her ſimpler and more modeſt beauties, is all that art can do to heighten the charms of nature.

Tranſported with this unexpected and beautiful proſpect, I threw myſelf down on one of the moſſy ſeats, to admire it at greater leiſure; but the air feeling moiſt

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in the grotto, Sir Charles would not allow me to continue there. "Since you approve of my taſte in the ſolemn, let me ſee," ſaid he, "whether you think I have been equally ſucceſsful in the gayer ſtile." Bleſs me! exclaimed I, will you never weary of ſurpriſing and inchanting me? "Never," replied he, "if I am always thus fortunate in pleaſing you." Again preſenting me with his arm, he led me out of the cavern, and purſuing the narrow path a little farther, it ſuddenly terminated in a ſweet incloſure, adorned with variety of flowers and ſhrubs, in the middle of which, ſurrounded with high trees, ſtood a temple inſcribed to Solitude.

"You may now reſt in ſafety after your fatigues," ſaid Sir Charles. "I ſhall conſider this Temple as ſacred to you, and never will intrude here, unleſs when invited. But, may I not flatter myſelf that I ſhall ſometimes be a welcome gueſt? May

I not hope that my gentle love will admit me to a ſhare even of her moſt ſacred and ſerious reflections?"——"Indeed, Sir Charles," returned I, with tears of gratitude, "whenever mine are of a nature to afford you pleaſure, I will know none equal to that of ſharing them with you."

Ah, Maria, will it be ever thus? will the wife he now idolizes be ever leſs tenderly eſteemed, leſs fondly beloved? Heaven forbid! elſe that world, to which his love alone has brought me back, would become like the waſte howling deſart to the forlorn exile, where nothing is left to hope, to wiſh, or to enjoy. Hitherto diſappointment has croſſed my path; I will ſtrive to believe that what remains of my journey Heaven will ſtrew with flowers.

Adieu.

Adieu, dear and amiable friend; you are ever preſent to the thoughts, and dear to the heart of your

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER LXXXVI.

Sir Charles Mortimer to Mr Belford.

Harwood.

I begin to think, my friend, that, with faculties ſo limited as ours, we are as unable to ſupport, without ſinking, an exceſs of joy, as of ſorrow. When laſt I addreſſed you, I was in a ſtate little ſhort of diſtraction; my misfortunes appeared to be without remedy; and the loſs of my Julia's affection ſeemed only a prelude to the loſs of herſelf.

What an aſtoniſhing, what a bleſſed change has taken place in my ſituation!

A change, which the almighty power of Heaven could alone have effected, and for which my gratitude will be as laſting as my exiſtence.

Julia, my exalted Julia, reſtored from the very gates of death, is now "mine entirely, mine forever!"

I will not attempt a deſcription of the deeply affecting ſcenes of the laſt fortnight; never, but with life, ſhall they be eraſed from my memory, never ceaſe to inſpire my ſoul with love and admiration of the moſt ingenuous, noble, and virtuous, of the human race.

Oh Belford! think what were my feelings, when hiding her tears and bluſhes in my boſom, ſhe opened her whole ſoul to my view! revealed her former paſſion, and, with angelic piety, invoked the aid of Heaven to aſſiſt her in renouncing forever an

an attachment, which ſhe now regards in the moſt criminal light.

Nor was this all: While repeating the ſacred vows ſhe had formerly pledged to me, with a tenderneſs of which I thought even Julia incapable, ſhe returned my fond careſſes, and aſſured me, in the moſt ſolemn manner, that I now poſſeſſed, and ever ſhould poſſeſs, her undivided heart.

Belford! my kind ſympathiſing friend, whoſe compaſſion has ſupported me under the preſſure of intolerable ſufferings, rejoice with me on occaſion of ſo unexpected, ſo unhoped a felicity; but which, till you ſhare it, ſeems incomplete.

Certainly, the ſecure poſſeſſion of any bleſſing never affords ſuch exquiſite enjoyment as we experience on its being reſtored, after having trembled with painful apprehenſion of loſing it forever.

So

So ſudden, ſo rapid, has been the revolution occaſioned in my mind, in one ſhort week, that I am hardly yet compoſed enough to taſte the whole of my happineſs.

I am juſt returned from wandering with my Julia, through fields, whoſe verdure and fragrance have refreſhed our ſenſes. How delightful is the enthuſiaſm inſpired by the country? How peaceful, how natural, how elegant, the pleaſures it ſupplies? We have followed, at a diſtance, a band of reapers, and heard with ſatisfaction their ruſtic muſic, and innocent mirth, which lighten thoſe labours that Heaven has appointed to be at once the means of their health, ſubſiſtence, and enjoyment.

After liſtening to the muſic of the woods, the bleating of flocks, and the murmuring of the diſtant caſcade, how enchanting is it to raiſe my eyes to thoſe of my

my lovely companion, and read there the ſame tranſports with which my grateful heart expands. Belford! theſe are pleaſures that wound not on reflection, nor pall by repetition. Pleaſures that are only to be enjoyed by thoſe that follow where reaſon and nature lead the way.

In cities, our beſt feelings are wounded every moment; every ſtreet preſents objects of miſery, with whoſe ſufferings (the effects of depravity) we cannot tenderly ſympathize, and whoſe habitual licentiouſneſs baffles every effort of benevolence to relieve them.

Nothing here offends the ear of modeſty, or checks the tear of compaſſion: Vice is ſtill frightful, becauſe not familiar. The alms we beſtow are received with gratitude; and, whilſt applied to ſuſtain the feebleneſs of age, and aſſuage the anguiſh of pain, we glow with conſcious elevation

of ſoul; we adore Him who permits us to become the diſpenſers of his bounty; we aſpire to reſemble the great Pattern of Philanthropy, and co-operate with the purpoſes of divine mercy towards the human race, in diffuſing around us peace and good-will.

Write ſoon, and aſſure me that you have already forgotten all the uneaſineſs occaſioned by my late diſtreſs, in your participation of the preſent unequalled felicity of your faithful, grateful, and affectionate friend,

CHARLES MORTIMER.

LETTER LXXXVII.

Miſs Herbert to Lady Mortimer.

London.

Yes, deareſt Julia, your virtue is triumphant, and your happineſs ſecure, as far as

as the preſent ſtate of things will permit. I ſee, with tranſport I ſee, that peace has once more reviſited that gentle boſom, which is a manſion ſuited to ſuch a gueſt, and from whence, I truſt, it will never again be baniſhed.

The emptineſs and vanity of life is not, my friend, the peeviſh complaint of diſcontent and miſery alone; it is the confeſſion of the conſcious mind in the height of proſperity, and in the hour of its deareſt enjoyment. Even then, ſomething is wanting to form the complete happineſs of beings ſuch as we are; a ſecurity, a ſtability, which nothing ſublunary can admit of. And, could we ſuppoſe a human being to gain poſſeſſion of every wiſh, we ſhould ſoon ſee him more miſerable, from that poſſeſſion, than others are from the abſence, of their darling objects. Hope and fear, in our preſent ſtate, are not only neceſſary to the health of the ſoul, but even

to its enjoyment; and hence it appears, that, to moderate, not extirpate our deſires, is the proper office of reaſon.

It affords me real ſatisfaction to obſerve the growing intimacy between you and the Cleveland family; nothing will tend more effectually to reſtore the amiable Rivers, than to be a witneſs of your happineſs with Sir Charles, and of your perfect eaſe when in company with himſelf. Beſides the near relation between Lord Cleveland and my uncle Stanley, the partial kindneſs with which that worthy family treated me, at a period when youth and inexperience require the indulgence which they ſeldom obtain, will forever engage my ſincereſt gratitude.

I am inchanted with your viſit to the Temple; but, ſhould ſome lucky chance convey me ſoon to Harwood, diſappointment, not pleaſure, would be the conſequence;

quence; for the cave, which Nature's ſelf has ſcooped, is not ſo hollow, the rocks ſhe has broken ſo rugged, the roar of her torrent ſo loud, nor the gloom of her woods ſo ſolemn, as thoſe which your glowing language has impreſſed on my imagination. Gladly, however, would I make the trial; but that at preſent is impoſſible; I muſt therefore reſt contented, with aſſuring my beloved friend of the ever increaſing eſteem and tenderneſs of her

MARIA HERBERT.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

Miſs Lucy Herbert to Mrs Helen Maria Stanley.

At length, dear Aunt, your Lucy is able to throw aſide all reſerves, and give you the hiſtory of her little light heart. With penetration like your's, I ſuppoſe it needs not be a long one; for, though delicacy

has prevented you from hinting your ſuſpicions, you muſt have been convinced, from a thouſand circumſtances, that Harry Stanley, without plan concerted, or intention declared, had ſtolen into the garriſon, and become maſter of all its ſtores. Heaven grant he may think a conqueſt ſo eaſily gained worth keeping!

But, to proceed in order: I was ſitting yeſterday in the parlour with Maria, when accident placed me in a hotter purgatory than I think my ſins deſerve. The ſervant entered with a parcel of letters, which he delivered to her. After caſting her eye on one of them, ſhe came up, and preſenting it to me, demanded, "how much poſtage I would willingly give for that letter?" The moment I ſaw the addreſs, my conſcious heart throbbed ſo violently, I could hardly breathe.

She

She ſlily repeated her queſtion. "The poſtage muſt be proportioned to the value of the contents," replied I. "And are you at preſent a competent judge of theſe? But come, come," continued ſhe ſmiling, with provoking archneſs, "I will give you the letter *gratis*, on condition that you will read it in my preſence, and allow me, mean time, to read your countenance."

I ſeized my little treaſure, flew up ſtairs, locked myſelf in my apartment, read the delightful confirmation of all I wiſhed and expected, and with implicit faith believed, as faſt as Harry could make them, thoſe proteſtations of everlaſting love, which have been a thouſand times made, and a thouſand times violated.

"Men (ſays ſomebody) would ſpare themſelves a great deal of trouble in impoſing on us, if they knew how eaſy the nobleneſs

nobleneſs of our ideas renders their deceits.

" A woman thinks herſelf degraded, by ſuppoſing the object of her affections unworthy; and no ſooner does ſhe love, than ſhe diſcovers more perfections in her lover than he dares to feign."

Harry tells me, that he was inſtigated to the deſperate reſolution of declaring a paſſion, (which by his own confeſſion, I ought not to approve,) by hearing of Captain Orde's addreſſes to me. But, though a new lover, like new wine, may intoxicate a little, the ſparkling fermentation of giddy paſſion is not to be compared with the mellow flavour of well ripened affection; and ſuch I know Harry's to be.

On mentioning the marriage of our two young friends at Windſor, " Happy pair!" exclaims he, " happy even in thoſe little embar-

embarraſſments which give you an opportunity of diſcovering to each other the delicacy of your affection, the tenderneſs of your gratitude, the diſintereſtedneſs of your attachment."

This, my dear Aunt, is fine talking; but, were Harry intimately acquainted with theſe ſame delectable embarraſſments, they would perhaps have as few charms for him as for me. I love him ſincerely; but I do not love him enough to make him miſerable; nor could I bear the reflection, that, by a cruel indulgence of his wiſhes and my own, I had involved him in inſurmountable difficulties.

Patience is a doctrine which moſt men do not underſtand, and which, to lovers, is incomprehenſible. Becauſe I will not marry him, I know Harry will pretend to queſtion the reality of my affection: I ſhall not diſpute the ſuperiority of his, nor wiſh

to

to be leſs his debtor on that ſcore: Nay, like an abſolute bankrupt, I would willingly put myſelf, and all my poſſeſſions, into his hands, were I not certain that, like other mercileſs creditors, he would obtain nothing by this meaſure, but the cruel conſciouſneſs of depriving me of liberty, without being himſelf a gainer by my thraldom.

His happineſs is the object of my wiſhes; and, however we may at preſent diſagree about the means of promoting it, I truſt he ſhall be convinced of my tenderneſs, by a thouſand proofs, which, flowing from the heart, make their way to the heart; are born with affection, and end but with life.

I need not enjoin my dear Aunt to obſerve the ſame ſilence on this ſubject as formerly. I cannot mention it even to Maria, who delicately ſhuns entering into

a

a confidence, which ſhe might be under a neceſſity of betraying, if queſtioned by my father, or other prudent relations.

I really wonder whether men feel as ſtrangely embarraſſed as we on certain occaſions. The moment Harry's name is mentioned, my heart beats in juſt ſuch a regular meaſure, as a young drummer at his firſt exerciſe; and I feel as if there were a window in my breaſt, through which every mortal obſerved its movements. I am reſolved to regulate them by your inſtructions; and, to convince you that they make a laſting impreſſion, ſhall conclude with your own words on a former occaſion:

"With caution does it become frail and ignorant mortals, to form wiſhes, or too anxiouſly indulge them, when they ariſe. Submiſſion and humility are beſt ſuited to our dependent ſtate; and firm reliance

reliance on that Wiſdom which is infallible, is as much our intereſt as our duty."

Mine, joined with ſincere affection, is ever your's,

LUCY HERBERT.

LETTER LXXXIX.

Lady Mortimer to Miſs Herbert.

Harwood.

After a day ſpent in that bliſsful quiet, which innocence alone can enjoy, and love and friendſhip confer, I take up my pen to redouble all my pleaſures, by communicating them to you.

Lady Sophia came early, and, in the moſt obliging manner, told me ſhe had brought her work, to ſhew me that ſhe con-

ſidered herſelf as quite at home. There is a ſerious ſweetneſs in the expreſſion of Lady Sophia's features, that intereſts your heart the moment you behold her; and the complacency of her manners makes you every hour more pleaſed with her, by making you pleaſed with yourſelf.

I could not help bluſhing at the earneſtneſs with which ſhe often gazed at me; and the ſighs that frequently ſtole from her gentle boſom almoſt perſuade me that ſhe is the confident of her brother's diſtreſs. I am the more inclined to think ſo, that ſhe ſhunned ſpeaking of him before Sir Charles, and ſeemed much affected by his kind and polite attentions to me.

How happy an exemption did I experience, on this occaſion, from that agonizing conſciouſneſs which the name of Rivers uſed formerly to awaken! I ſpoke of him to Lady Sophia in thoſe terms of

eſteem and amity which are due to his merit. I tenderly regretted his indiſpoſition, and even bade her aſſure him, that Sir Charles joined me in ardent wiſhes for his ſpeedy recovery. I aſked, whether he had thoughts of going to Bath? She anſwered, with a ſigh, that he really was ſo irreſolute and variable in his preſent plans, it was impoſſible to know on what he would determine.

Sir Charles drove us round the pleaſure grounds, and, at my requeſt, conducted Lady Sophia into the Cavern and Temple, with which ſhe ſeemed quite charmed. "Since your Ladyſhip is ſo fond of retirement," ſaid Sir Charles, "and Lady Mortimer is not yet able for the fatigue of viſiting, I think you could not do us a more kind, and, I hope I may add, a more agreeable action, than return here on Monday, and ſpend the day in rambling about the

the woods together, as I am obliged to be abſent on particular buſineſs."

"With all my heart," replied Lady Sophia, with the moſt engaging frankneſs. "I begin, however, to repent this raſh requeſt," ſaid Sir Charles. "I fear the preſence of her friend will prevent my Julia from regretting the abſence of her huſband."

"Ah, there is no danger," replied ſhe, with a ſweet ſmile, "that Sophia Rivers will ever ſupplant Sir Charles Mortimer."

Maria! what tenderneſs, what ſuperior delicacy does Sir Charles poſſeſs! After Lady Sophia left me, he came into my dreſſing room. "I come to aſk your advice, Julia," ſaid he; "I really know not how to act with reſpect to poor Rivers. I am a thouſand times more than ever inte-

reſted in his peace; I know nothing I would not gladly undertake to promote it; but I fear the very attentions of a ſucceſsful rival, might appear like an inſult to a heart yet bleeding from recent diſappointment.—Heaven knows how much I pity, how ſincerely eſteem him!

"I rode out this evening with an intention to call at the Grove; but, as I approached the avenue, my reſolution failed me. The thought of giving pain to a mind like his, is agony. He was juſt mounting his horſe as I came within ſight of the houſe; and, the moment he perceived me, he turned another way, and rode haſtily out of ſight.—Unhappy, deſerving Rivers! may Heaven reſtore thee to health and peace, if not to happineſs!"

I agreed with my huſband, that it would be better to decline viſiting at the Grove, till

till time ſhould aſſuage that diſtreſs, which at preſent could not admit of any relief.

Adieu, my much loved friend; may Heaven's beſt bleſſings ever ſurround you, prays your

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER XC.

Lady Mortimer to Miſs Herbert.

Harwood.

Maria! ſhall I never know peace! Sir Charles is abſent, my burſting heart ſeeks for ſome one, to whom it may pour forth its ſorrows!—O amiable, reſpectable, ever to be lamented Rivers! whether ſhall I moſt admire thy virtues, or deplore thy misfortunes! May that pitying God, who has reſtored comfort to my boſom, grant thee ſpeedy conſolation! may it deſcend to

thee from Heaven! for, alas! I fear it will never be found by thee on earth!

Sir Charles, as he propoſed, ſet out early this morning. Having waited for Lady Sophia two hours longer than our appointed time of meeting, I ordered the phaeton; and having put a volume of Cowley in my pocket, made James drive me into the wood, and return and wait for Lady Sophia, telling him ſhe would either find me at the Temple or Grotto. Having ſauntered about the wood till I was tired, I entered the Temple; and ſitting down, took out my book, and read the beautiful and pathetic lines, occaſioned by the death of the author's friend.

A croud of tender ideas aſſociated with this ſubject, my laſt night's converſation with Sir Charles, the account of the diſtreſs and indiſpoſition of Rivers, pity for his unmerited ſufferings, and fear leſt increaſing

ſing illneſs had detained his ſiſter from me, all united to agitate my mind, and overwhelm my ſpirits to ſuch a degree, that I diſſolved in tears. I held my handkerchief to my eyes, and, ſupporting my head on my hand, gave way for ſome minutes to the violence of my emotions. Judge if they were leſſened, when, on raiſing my eyes, I beheld Rivers himſelf ſtanding before me, pale and motionleſs as a ſtatue. I ſcreamed aloud with ſurpriſe, and, not knowing what I did, exclaimed, "Heavens! it is Rivers! it is himſelf!"

After a few moments of profound ſilence, I aroſe, and aſſuming all the eaſe and compoſure I could command, "My Lord," ſaid I, "this is a pleaſure I did not expect." He attempted to anſwer me in the ſame ſtile; but his voice faultered ſo much, he could hardly articulate. "I come, Madam," replied he, "to make my

ſiſter's

ſiſter's apology, who is detained at home by the arrival of company."

My weak limbs trembled ſo violently, I was obliged to ſit down. I deſired Lord Rivers to be ſeated, and endeavoured to ſay ſomething, I know not what. He threw himſelf on a ſeat. We both remained ſilent; then, after ſeveral vain attempts to ſtart ſome ſubject, to which he did not ſeem to pay any attention, he aroſe, and approaching me, ſaid, with a ſolemn and affecting tone, fixing his eyes ſtedfaſtly on my face, "This is the laſt time my preſence ſhall give you pain—You have acted greatly—fear not to complete what you have ſo nobly begun. "Tell me, Julia," continued he, with a look of inconceivable anguiſh, "tell me, I beſeech you, what are the dreadful circumſtances too painful to be enumerated? who has deceived us? who has ruined me beyond redemption?"

I roſe, and taking hold of his hand, "Rivers," ſaid I, "I know of what exertions a ſoul like your's is capable: I will not diſſemble with you: I will not fear to tell you all: But, Oh Rivers! as you value my preſent, my everlaſting peace—by that tenderneſs which united us—that reduced me to deſpair—that almoſt deprived me of exiſtence—ſtrive, O generouſly ſtrive, to follow my example. Make a ſacrifice of your deareſt hopes to Heaven, which would doubtleſs have accompliſhed them, had their ſucceſs been compatible with our felicity."

He withdrew to a diſtance from me, and leaning his forehead againſt one of the pillars, burſt into an agony of grief. Maria! imagine what I felt at that moment!

Inſtead of ſeeming to pay any attention to his extreme affliction, I ſtruggled to ſuppreſs

ſuppreſs my own; whilſt, with as much fortitude as I could exert, I communicated to him the various circumſtances which had combined to deceive us, my ſubſequent diſtreſſes, the generoſity of Sir Charles, and laſtly, the diſcovery of the letters in my father's repoſitory.

The moment I mentioned them, he ſeemed entirely to forget I was preſent. He threw himſelf with violence on the ground; he wept, he raved, he curſed the authors of our miſery; he even implored from Heaven the diſſolution of a being which was now become inſupportable. Unable to behold ſuch a ſpectacle of woe, I roſe to retire; but was too feeble to walk without aſſiſtance. "Rivers!" ſaid I, "you terrify, you afflict me; I wiſhed to ſpeak you comfort, but you drive me from your preſence. After what I have ſuffered for your ſake, is it generous thus to diſturb my peace, to overwhelm me with

with affliction! I wish to be your friend; but you renounce my profered kindness." —"My friend!" repeated he wildly; "O Julia! idol of my distracted soul! is this, is this all that remains for the wretched Rivers!"

I continued silent with inexpressible anguish. He took hold of my hand, and bathing it with tears, "Tell me, Julia," said he, with frightful earnestness, "tell me, I conjure you, "is it really possible you no longer love me, that you have abandoned me to utter despair!—Oh! and is all forgotten! Your vows, a thousand times repeated, in presence of Heaven, to be only, unalterably mine?—Distraction!—Are you not the wife of Mortimer?—But, what are Mortimer's claims to mine?" cried he, starting up, and looking wildly round, "I loved you first,—I first possessed your heart, and only with life will I resign it!"

Quite

Quite terrified wich the violence of his manner, I again attempted riſing. With a frantic air he caught hold of my gown. "Stay, one moment ſtay," cried he with vehemence. "Hear me, Julia—compaſſionate him, you once tenderly loved—Remember this is the laſt time theſe eyes ſhall ever behold you.—Oh ſtay and witneſs the anguiſh of my ſoul,—and if you can no more—at leaſt pity, while you renounce me forever!"

A flood of tears came to my relief. "Unhapppy Rivers," ſaid I, "I do pity you with my whole heart. But, by that very tenderneſs you profeſs for me, ſhew yourſelf worthy of my eſteem: Reflect, I beſeech you, that I am indeed the wife of another, and do not deſtroy me by talking in this manner."

After many fruitleſs attempts to reply, he roſe, and walked towards the window, where

where he ſtood for ſeveral minutes, with his hands claſped over his forehead, and his eyes raiſed towards Heaven; then returning ſlowly towards me, and fixing them mournfully on my face, with a faint and tremulous voice, "Julia!" ſaid he, "it is paſt! the dreadful conflict is paſt! O pardon the unhappy man, who thus cruelly afflicts you! he will do ſo no more. Your pious example, your aſtoniſhing fortitude, have at length prevailed, and I now look up to you with reverence, as to a ſuperior being!" Then gently taking my hand, and preſſing it to his lips: "Angelic purity! exalted goodneſs!" ſaid he, "fear nothing more from the phrenzy, the extravagance of a man, whom your virtue will at length reſtore to reaſon, to honour, to ſilent uncomplaining ſubmiſſion. Yes! though I will love you with ardour, love you till death, I ſhall taſte the ſweet conſolation of being aſſured, that I ſtill love the faithful, the

generous, the exalted Julia Greville! That, no longer deceived by appearances, ſhe knows me guiltleſs; ſhe honours me with her eſteem, her friendſhip! That ſhe will ever regard me with affection—perhaps one day lament me with ſincerity. Amiable, admired, adored Julia!" continued he, raiſing his ſtreaming eyes to Heaven, "live long and happy!—but Oh, amidſt health, and joy, and peace, think, think, ſometimes of the languiſhing, deſolate, exiled Rivers, who will never, but with life, loſe the remembrance of you!"

This was too much for me to ſupport, Maria! Weak, agitated, afflicted, my little remaining ſtrength entirely forſook me, and I fell ſenſeleſs on the ground. I awaked, as from a confuſed dream, in the arms of the weeping, diſtracted Rivers, who, after gazing on me ſome moments in ſilence, and preſſing me to his panting boſom, ſtarted up, and replacing me gently in

in my ſeat, cried, in a faint voice, "Farewell, Julia! O farewell forever!" and inſtantly diſappeared.

How ſtrange does it ſeem, my friend, that I ſhould rejoice in the proſpect of being ſeparated from the man, of all others, I moſt loved! Yes, Maria! I am glad he is gone, gone forever! I am convinced it is abſolutely neceſſary that we ſhould be divided. Though I no longer love him with a painful, a criminal tenderneſs, the ſight of his ſufferings would deſtroy me. Time and abſence, theſe two great healers of the human heart, whoſe influence all feel, even at the moment their power is diſclaimed, theſe will, I truſt, reſtore peace to Rivers. My ardent prayers ſhall daily ariſe for his peace; but it is only at a diſtance from each other we can hope to enjoy this firſt of bleſſings.

When Sir Charles arrived, he presented me with a card from the Cleveland family, requesting us to dine at the Grove next Tuesday. "As you are so well, my love," said he, "I ventured to promise in your name without consulting you." Seeing me look confused, Sir Charles immediately guessed the cause. "Perhaps," said he, "it will be best that our first meeting with Rivers take place soon. Frequent intercourse with that amiable family will tend to wear off every disagreeable impression." I was silent; I feared so soon to recall the scene which had so deeply affected me. "Why hesitates my Julia?" said Sir Charles. "If this visit would prove disagreeable, your present weakly state may supply a sufficient excuse for declining it; but, to people who have the prospect of living always so near each other, and who seem all equally disposed to cultivate intimacy, something ought to be sacrificed." "It is alike my interest and inclination

clination to do ſo," replied I; but, to-morrow, when I am in better ſpirits, I will give you my reaſons for delaying our viſit."

With his uſual delicacy he immediately changed the ſubject; and ſeeing me look extremely languid and fatigued, kindly urged me to reſt a little on the couch, adding, with a ſmile, "Perhaps you could ſleep juſt now without the aid of a ſermon; but, I believe, I may venture to defy Morpheus himſelf, when I inform you that I am going to read Evelina."

I mention theſe particulars, to ſhew my friend how perfectly Sir Charles underſtands the art of rendering domeſtic life agreeable. How ſtrange is it, Maria, that in general we ſhould aſpire to ſhine, rather than pleaſe! The former power is confined to a few, and often fails of producing the deſired effect; the latter art

may be practiſed by all, and always with ſucceſs. How ſtrange is it, that, in public companies, where we aſſociate for an hour, and then ſeparate, perhaps, to meet no more, we ſhould be attentive, obſequious, entertaining; and, in the private circle of our friends, and families, where the diſplay of our talents, and exertion of our benevolence, can be of real utility, and meet with certain approbation, we are careleſs, indifferent, negligent, and even unkind!

Would we conſult our own happineſs, we would ſtrive to promote the happineſs of others. It is only when our pleaſures are reverberated that they become delightful.

Adieu, adieu. If I write any more, you will be as tired with reading, as I am with writing this letter,

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER

LETTER XCI.

Lady Mortimer to Miſs Herbert.

Harwood.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I regret the anxiety my ſilence has occaſioned you; but it was unavoidable: The perturbation of my mind, during my interview with the unhappy Rivers, had ſo viſible an effect on my health, that, to remove in part the uneaſineſs of the beſt of huſbands, I was obliged to account for my illneſs, by giving him a detail of the melancholy particulars.

Were it poſſible for Sir Charles to riſe in my eſteem, he would have done ſo on this occaſion. How bleſt am I, my dear Maria! in being no longer under the painful neceſſity of labouring to conceal that ſorrow, which it is impoſſible not to feel exqui-

exquiſitely, and which can only be moderated by being participated.

I confeſs to you, in ſpite of all the tenderneſs of this generous, beſt of men, I feel it difficult to conquer the extreme affliction which the deplorable ſituation of Rivers has renewed. His image is ever before my eyes, ſuch as I ſaw him at the moment of our ſeparation, wild, defpairing, almoſt diſtracted. I tremble to think to what extremes a man of ſuch keen ſenſibility, and with ſuch high wrought paſſions, may be driven! May Heaven, in pity, reſtore him to peace!

Fain would I hope, Maria, that time, abſence, and the active ſcenes connected with his profeſſion, will diſſipate, by degrees, the remains of a paſſion, which we are aſſured cannot always exiſt when deprived of hope. One wiſh, O ſtrange inconſiſtency! I have not yet courage to form,

form, that another object might entirely baniſh from his heart her, who can no longer with honour poſſeſs it. Maria! dare I breathe this weakneſs to you! Yes, becauſe I am conſcious that I no longer indulge it; that the dying embers which pity has a moment revived, virtue will inſtantly extinguiſh.

As my ſpirits are very languid, I will lay aſide my pen till to-morrow.

In Continuation.

I was ſurpriſed this morning with an early viſit from Lady Sophia. She looked extremely dejected; and, on my inquiring anxiouſly after the health of her brother, ſhe burſt into tears. "Rivers," ſaid ſhe, "ſet out this morning for Bath. Do not blame him, dear Lady Mortimer, (kindly taking hold of my hand), I am too young,

young, perhaps, to merit the confidence he has repoſed in me; but I will ſtrive to deſerve, and never will abuſe it. Oh, Lady Mortimer, how I love, how I pity, my dear brother! When he heard that you and Sir Charles were to dine at the Grove on Tueſday, he told me that he felt it would be utterly impoſſible for him to be preſent, without betraying his ſecret to the family, all of whom, except myſelf, are ignorant of it." "As my furlough expires in three weeks," ſaid he, "I will ſpend them at Bath; perhaps the waters may be of ſervice to me. I will then return to the Grove, and ſee you once more before I embark. Take this picture, Sophia, and preſent it to Lady Mortimer. I know ſhe will ſometimes think of me, and this image may help to bring me to her remembrance.

Often mention me to her, my dear ſiſter; it will be a conſolation to me, when

I am far diſtant, to think that I am tenderly remembered by two ſuch friends." When he bade me farewell, there was a look of ſuch peculiar ſadneſs expreſſed in his countenance, that it pierced my heart to behold him: He turned back at the door, and ſaid, in a low and melancholy voice, Sophia! Remember your brother, Remember his laſt injunctions!"

When I reflect on the whole of his manner, I cannot help ſuſpecting that he is deceiving us with a falſe hope of ſeeing him again; and that he intends going directly from Bath to Portſmouth. My father has uſed every argument, ſhort of an abſolute command, to prevail with him to reſign his commiſſion. But you know him too well to wonder at his reſolution. He ſays, 'To deſert his ſtation in the very middle of a conteſt, ſo important to his country, were little

little leſs than treaſon.' He has promiſed, however, in the moſt ſolemn manner, that the moment he can quit the army with honour, he will return to the embraces of a parent and ſiſters, who now repoſe all their hopes on him.

I received the picture with much ſatisfaction, and deſired Lady Sophia to inform her brother, when next ſhe wrote, that it ſhould remain with me through life; and that his virtues ſhould continue to be cheriſhed in that breaſt, which his image ſhould henceforth adorn.

When Sir Charles entered, I preſented him with the picture. "See," ſaid I, "what an invaluable treaſure Lord Rivers has ſent me." He looked at it with tender complacency; and again reſtoring it it to me. "It is indeed invaluable, from its reſemblance to the original," ſaid he: "Preſerve it with care, my Julia; it is worthy

worthy of its preſent ſituation. I conſent that this new favourite ſhall ſhare with your huſband his moſt precious poſſeſſion, your affectionate, your faithful boſom."

Lady Sophia's looks ſufficiently expreſſed her admiration of Sir Charles's generous behaviour; and, preſently after, on his quitting the room, "Moſt ſincerely do I participate in your felicity, my dear Madam," ſaid ſhe; "ſince Heaven forbade that you ſhould be Lady Rivers, it is my chief conſolation to ſee you Lady Mortimer."

Company being engaged to dine at the Grove, Lady Sophia was obliged to leave me about one o'clock. The day was delightful, and I wiſhed to enjoy it abroad. I tapped ſoftly at the door of the library, where I knew Sir Charles was ſitting. Being deeply engaged in a book, he called, in a careleſs manner, "Come in." I did

ſo; the moment he perceived me, he ſprung from his ſeat, "My Julia! my love! is it you? Forgive my rudeneſs: But Locke is a foe to good breeding, and muſt anſwer for my offence." "I know not," ſaid I, "whether you will pardon mine; by deſtroying the chain of your ideas, perhaps I have robbed the world of ſome important diſcovery." "Ah, Julia," returned he, "to diſcover that I am beloved by you, that my preſence gives you pleaſure, is worth more than the applauſe, the admiration of the whole world to me."

"But I am going to incroach on your time, as well as your thoughts," ſaid I; "the recollection of the delightful ſcenes we viſited laſt Thurſday inſpires me with a reſtleſs curioſity to take another view of them: That I had with you was but a ſuperficial one: Beſides, I wiſh to conſecrate my Temple to love and friendſhip, inſtead of

of ſolitude ; and, that I may never disjoin your image from it, you muſt attend me, while I pay my firſt devoirs there."

" With tranſport, will I attend you," he replied, " ſecure that you will conduct me to virtue and happineſs—— Oh! Julia," added he, with a ſigh, " what pity is it that mankind ſo miſerably miſtake the road! Would to Heaven half the young men of my acquaintance would come to Harwood, and learn what it is to live, to be reaſonable, to be happy!

We ſet out on our little tour. Every object was beautiful, and our minds were in harmony with the quiet which ſurrounded us. When we reached the Temple, the recollection of parting there with Rivers ruſhed on my mind, and forced repeated ſighs from my boſom. My affectionate huſband remarked my ſilence, and fixing his eyes on me with an earneſtneſs that

ſoon recalled the colour which had left my face, tenderly inquired if I felt any uneaſineſs?

"It is impoſſible!—I feel it is, Sir Charles," ſaid I, "by any effort, entirely to baniſh the recollection of the paſt. In proportion as my own happineſs increaſes, my regrets on account of Rivers—ſo amiable, yet ſo unhappy, likewiſe increaſe. An exile from his friends, a ſtranger to our felicity, not even your loved ſociety can obliterate from my memory the anguiſh I ſaw him ſuffer here."

"With a heart poſſeſſed of ſuch ſenſibility as your's," interrupted he, "it cannot be otherwiſe; but, let me ſhare, at leaſt, my deareſt Julia, in theſe regrets, ſo due to him, ſo worthy of yourſelf; I do not wiſh to baniſh, though I fondly hope to moderate them; and it is delightful to be aſſured, that, on every occaſion, our feelings

ings are perfectly in harmony with each other."

Juſt as Sir Charles ended this ſpeech, a ſervant came to inform him, that a gentleman waited for him on particular buſineſs.

Wiſhing to indulge my reflections a little longer, I prevailed with him to leave me alone, promiſing to follow him in a few minutes. Deeply affected with the kindneſs and delicacy of Sir Charles's whole conduct, which I was now at leiſure to review, I took out my pencil, and wrote the following lines on one of the pillars, intending that he ſhould find them there next time he viſited the Temple.

Let no unhallowed feet approach this Grove,
This is the ſacred Fane of virtuous Love!
None who would truth abuſe, or faith betray,
Or ſmooth with ſpecious arts ſeduction's way.

But

But come, O Mortimer! whom love inſpires,
Whoſe boſom glows with friendſhip's ſacred fires,
Who feels for human kind, whoſe generous ſoul
To one devoted, not forgets the whole;
Candid to merit, liberal to diſtreſs,
Who only taſtes when giving happineſs:
A dearer joy than ſolitude can give,
Thy Julia from thy preſence ſhall receive;
A higher bliſs than calm reflection prove,
The bliſs of boundleſs confidence and love;
Then hither come, renew thy vows with me,
This Temple ope's its willing gates for thee!

I had juſt finiſhed, and was ſtanding with my pencil in my hand, when Sir Charles entered ſoftly. I ſtarted with ſurpriſe, and endeavoured to conceal what I had written, by directing his eyes to ſome diſtant object. But my confuſion at once betrayed, and fruſtrated my deſign. "How!" cried Sir Charles, "another attempt at concealment, after having formerly ſucceeded ſo ill? But, indeed, my Julia, your modeſty ſhall not rob your huſband

huſband of one effuſion of that dear heart he now calls his own, and which has already afforded him ſuch exquiſite pleaſure." So ſaying, he gently removed my hand from the place, and read the verſes.

"My Julia! my angel!" cried he, his eyes ſparkling with ſurpriſe and pleaſure, "How many ways do you contrive to inchant me! You, alone, of all the human race, know the true art of enjoying life. If you go on in this way to intoxicate me, you will poſitively unfit me for keeping company with men and women in their ſober ſenſes."

In this manner, my friend, we paſs ur time moſt agreeably. Never more, I truſt, ſhall diſguiſe or reſtraint be known between us. Surely, Maria, of all taſks which duty can impoſe, that of diſſembling is the moſt difficult. Of all indulgences friend-

friendſhip ſupplies, that of unbounded and fearleſs confidence is the moſt delightful.

I am often aſtoniſhed to hear people complain of the dullneſs and inſipidity of a country life, and the languor inſeparable from the uniform tenor of the marriage ſtate. If we ſuffer ourſelves to ſink into ſloth or inactivity; if we wrap ourſelves up in a joyleſs and ſelfiſh indifference; if we are at no pains to be generous, kind, ſelf-denied, and diſintereſted; to encourage, by our own, the good humour and complacency of others, where is the rank, the ſituation, the circumſtances, that will baniſh liſtleſſneſs, or ſupply enjoyment? But ſurely, with health, peace, and competence, the proper duties of a domeſtic ſtate, the aids of reading and working, the exerciſes and amuſements peculiar to the country, one may contrive to fill up every hour, both with pleaſure and advantage. But, if ſuperadded to theſe, we enjoy the refined,

refined, the elegant pleaſures of love, friendſhip, devotion, charity,—we may affirm of ſuch a life, that it is a poſitive bleſſing, an exalted privilege, a commencing heaven! Such may every future year prove to the friend I love! Already poſſeſſed of theſe ineſtimable bleſſings, ſoon may your preſence convince me, that my heart is ſuſceptible of emotions ſtill more lively and delightful than any I have yet experienced: By being at once a witneſs and ſharer in my felicity, ſoon may you convert ſerene contentment to heart-beating Joy.

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER XCII.

Lady Mortimer to Miſs Herbert.

Harwood.

Lady Sophia's ſuſpicions were but too well founded, my dear Maria. A ſudden order

order for the troops to embark, before the equinoctial ſtorms, has obliged Lord Rivers to quit Bath, and ſet off directly for Portſmouth. She brought me a moſt affecting letter to-day, which ſhe had juſt received from him. He paints, in ſtrong pathetic language, the ſtruggle between his deſire to ſee once more his friends in ——ſhire, and his dread of giving pain to one in particular. He ſays, that, not daring to confide in his own reſolution, if within a mile of Harwood, he is determined to ſet out immediately for Portſmouth. He expreſſes admiration of Sir Charles's noble conduct, and gratitude for his kind remembrance; and adds, "that envy of his happineſs is almoſt extinguiſhed in approbation of his worth." "Happy, unconſcious image," concludes he, "how I envy thy ſituation; yet happier, far happier Rivers! Thou adorneſt her boſom, but he ſhares her heart."

This

This little ſally afforded me the livelieſt ſatisfaction. It beſpoke a mind more at eaſe than any of his former letters had done. O may Heaven watch over him, and ſoon reſtore him, in health and peace, to that family, and thoſe friends, to whom he is unſpeakably dear.

I often wonder, Maria, at the aſtoniſhing variety of ſentiments of which the human heart is capable. There is a tenderneſs in the ſympathy, a poignancy in the regret, I feel for Rivers, for which language furniſhes no adequate expreſſion. The ſight of his hand never fails to make my heart throb with a conſciouſneſs that alarms me, with a painful, too painful remembrance of the paſt.

I never read any of his letters to his ſiſter without diſſolving into tears; and, to you, Maria, the confident of every movement of my ſoul, to you I will acknowledge,

ledge, that the compaſſion his misfortunes excite, is of ſo animated a nature, that it renders me jealous and unquiet, when I contraſt it with thoſe ſerene and tranquil ſentiments which the kindneſs of my huſband alone inſpires.

I flatter myſelf that this is to be imputed to weakneſs, not perverſeneſs, and that Heaven will pardon an involuntary offence, to which my will conſents not. In truth, my friend, I am perſuaded, by fatal experience, that the vivacity of our firſt impreſſions can never be equalled by any ſucceeding ones; that, in the heart which has once tenderly, truly loved, the enthuſiaſm of affection can never be a ſecond time renewed; and that a ſoul, long depreſſed by affliction, can ſcarcely be reanimated by love.

Theſe ſentiments, at firſt ſight, ſeem treaſonable, from one in my preſent ſituation;

tion ; but I hope I am neither criminal in feeling, nor imprudent in repeating them to you. I am truly grateful for my unequalled bleſſings ; nay more, I am happier, far happier than the generality of my ſpecies ; and, did not officious memory often whiſper what I once was, reaſon, with what I now am, would render me completely bleſt.

So conſcious am I of the danger of harbouring ſentiments which, under the inſinuating forms of friendſhip and humanity, might enfeeble my weak and unſettled reſolutions, that I have this day offered a ſacrifice to duty, which, I confeſs, required all my courage, and of the propriety, and even neceſſity of which, I am now convinced, by the pain it coſt me.

Fearful of the conſequences of allowing myſelf to read at times thoſe letters, every ſentence of which is too deeply engraven

on the tablets of my heart; and, diſtruſtful of my reſolution, never again to indulge my ſight with tracing the lines, impreſſed by the hand, and breathing the very ſoul of Rivers, I carefully collected them this morning, and was tying them together in a bundle, when Sir Charles haſtily entered my apartment. His unexpected appearance threw me into the utmoſt confuſion. A few tears had forced their way down my cheek, as I took a laſt ſurvey of the little treaſure, from which the moſt exquiſite enjoyment of my life had once been derived. This did not eſcape the watchful affection of Sir Charles. He ſtopt. "I beg pardon, my love," ſaid he, in a tone ſoftened by compaſſion, "I fear I diſturb you. I thought you were in your dreſſing-room, elſe I would not have intruded in this manner."

I could not ſpeak; my heart ſwelled almoſt to burſting: But, holding out my hand,

hand, as wiſhing him to approach, I gave vent for ſome moments to the painful variety of feelings, too agitating to be reſtrained. Then holding out the parcel, marked, "Letters from Mr Rivers to Miſs Greville," that my huſband might read the ſuperſcription, I aroſe, and with a trembling hand committed them to the flames. "The happy wife of Sir Charles Mortimer," ſaid I, "ought to have no regrets connected with the unhappy Julia Greville."

He gazed on me ſome moments in ſilent aſtoniſhment; tears ſwelled into his eyes, and claſping me to his throbbing boſom, with a deep ſigh he exclaimed, "O Julia, exalted pattern of all that is amiable and reſpectable, others know what is right, but you love it; others talk of virtue, but you practiſe it. Think not, my deareſt Julia, that ſuch a ſacrifice as this was neceſſary for the ſecurity of your huſband's

repoſe. No, my love! my reliance on you is fixed as my dependence on Heaven. It may, however, be neceſſary, for the peace of your own boſom; that gentle, that compaſſionate boſom, is too much alive to every human woe, and muſt have bled afreſh at every remembrance of one whoſe conſtant attachment merits your gratitude, and ſecures my eſteem."

The recollection of this affecting interview, Maria, ſtill greatly agitates my ſpirits: But how little ſhould I deſerve the affection of ſuch a huſband, did I not embrace every opportunity of making you acquainted with the whole excellency of his character?

Seldom have I more earneſtly wiſhed for your preſence than this day, when our admired Dr —— diſcourſed, with his uſual energy, on the nature and importance of the Chriſtian temper. How would your

ſoul

ſoul have vibrated in ſympathy with the ſentiments of the preacher, whilſt he touched, with maſterly ſkill, ſome of the fineſt feelings of the human heart.

During the ſervice, Sir Charles regarded me with pleaſed attention, and when it was over, "Julia," ſaid he, "I have been liſtening to your character. Your's is that extenſive charity, that fervent piety, that forbearing gentleneſs, that graceful humility,"——"Hold, hold, Sir Charles," ſaid I, "the pride which your praiſe at this moment inſpires, is an inconteſtible proof of your miſtaken opinion."

After all, Maria, there is not a ſtronger incitement to virtue (the approbation of Heaven excepted) than the praiſe of thoſe whoſe eſteem we covet, and whom we truly love.

That ſoul muſt be miſerably debaſed, which can derive pleaſure from the imputation of merit, which it is neither conſcious of deſerving, nor deſirous of attaining.

I feel ſenſibly the effects of Sir Charles's ſpeech, in the chearful flow of my ſpirits, and the grateful glow of my heart. Ah, my friend! is it for us to be proud, who are thus dependent on accidental circumſtances, not only for the tone of our minds, but even for the exerciſe of our virtues? Mine, alas! are but feeble and imperfect. Indeed, Maria, I am not what my partial friends think me; what I ardently wiſh to be. But I will never ceaſe imploring Heaven to endow me with that pure, peaceable, gentle wiſdom, whoſe fruits ſufficiently prove that its origin is from above.

Adieu. In one point I never can deceive you, or myſelf; I mean the tender and

and lasting affection with which I am your sincere friend.

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER XCIII.

Miss Lucy Herbert to Mrs Helen Maria Stanley.

London.

You are unjust, both to yourself and me, my dear Aunt, in alledging that it is from want of confidence in your friendship that I remain obstinately silent, on "the subject most interesting to my heart." And is it not a proof of wisdom to be silent when one cannot speak to the purpose? I wish to Heaven half my sex were of my opinion!

You still accuse me of an unpardonable love of ridicule: How would you admire my

my forbearance, had you paſſed the day with me, which I unwillingly have been compelled to waſte, in the company of two of the moſt fooliſh of all the fooliſh virgins I have ever yet encountered; and who think to do honour to Heaven, and eſtabliſh a high reputation to themſelves, by bolting out religious ſentiments in Scripture-language, in all companies; and, with the moſt diſguſting grimace, ſpiritualizing every occurrence of their ſtupid lives.

How indelicate, how imprudent, is ſuch a conduct! how oppoſite to the humble and modeſt ſpirit of Chriſtianity, how injurious to the intereſts of religion itſelf! Nothing, ſurely, can betray a greater want of underſtanding. Had I thought them hypocrites, I would not have ſpared them; but, as I believed them only fools, I was ſilent.

But,

But, to return from this digreſſion; I am ſorry to inform my dear Aunt, that there is yet no change on the aſpect of my affairs. You ſay juſtly, "my deſires are moderate—life is ſhort—wealth cannot give happineſs,"—and twenty things equally true, and equally inapplicable to the caſe in queſtion. But, though Harry has artfully contrived, by making you his confident, to engage you in his intereſt, allow me to remind you, that *ſomething* is neceſſary towards exiſting with decency, and that at preſent we have *nothing*. In ſpite of all I have heard of the joyleſs, taſteleſs eaſe of affluence, I ſtill muſt think a decent competence abſolutely neceſſary to comfort; and, however Harry affects to doubt of my ſentiments, were he poſſeſſed of three hundred pounds a year, I would leave prudence, and all her virtue-favouring train, to thoſe better fitted to improve by their ſociety; marry him to-

night,

night, and cure him at once of his love and his infidelity.

My dear Aunt, adviſe Harry to ſupport with patience an abſence, the neceſſity for which we muſt both regret; and, whilſt we follow the path that reaſon points out, let us cheriſh the hopes which affection inſpires. Let us accuſtom ourſelves to view the bright ſide of our proſpects, and truſt that time and fortune, or rather that Providence, has many happy events in ſtore for thoſe who patiently wait their arrival.

Pray, tell me all the news of the country; at preſent, dullneſs reigns unrivalled in town. How I admire, how I envy you the poſſeſſion of thoſe ſingular and ſuperior abilities, by which Nature has diſtinguiſhed you, and which have rendered you perfectly independent of thoſe frivolous amuſements on which half our

ſex

ſex rely for enjoyment. The expectaion of the future is the ſource of the moſt ſincere pleaſure I now taſte; and, though all inamorato's muſt either feel or feign thoſe doubts, fears, and apprehenſions, which are the very elements of love, believe me, Harry is not ignorant that this ſeparation is at leaſt as irkſome to me as to him, though I do not make ſuch a fuſs about it.

I have been lulled to ſtupidity of late, by calm content. My ſoul is not made for it. I muſt be agitated with pain or pleaſure: Nay, fully to enjoy life, I muſt be able to give both. Here, neither is in my power. Would I were married! Then it is that a woman becomes miſtreſs of her divine prerogative; then ſhe can never be at a loſs for a ſubject on which to exerciſe her every humour.

Con-

Conſtantly to repeat aſſurances of my eſteem and affection, would, I think, imply a ſuſpicion that you were ſceptical on that head. You do not, you cannot, diſtruſt thoſe I have already given you: You never can be ſo unjuſt to your own merit, or my ſincerity, as to doubt, that with unbounded affection, I am your's ever.

LUCY HERBERT.

LETTER XCIV.

Mrs Helen Maria Stanley to Miſs Lucy Herbert.

Stanley-farm.

The voice of praiſe, my dear girl, is ever ſoothing: No ear is ſo dull, no heart ſo cold, as not to be agreeably affected by it. Though the ſeaſon of youth and vanity is long ſince gone, I am pleaſed with the praiſes you beſtow on what you term "my ſingular and ſuperior abilities."

Truſt

Truſt me, Lucy, a humble, pious, ingenuous heart is far preferable, in my opinion, to the moſt ſhining talents that ever diſtinguiſhed any of the human race: And a life formed on the precepts of the Goſpel, a thouſand times more happy and reſpectable, than that of the moſt illuſtrious hero, that ever ignorance extolled, or ſuperſtition deified.

How unreaſonable are they, my dear Lucy, who affirm, that Chriſtianity is either adverſe to the intereſts of ſociety, or enjoyments of life! It furniſhes the nobleſt motives for good conduct; it enforces virtue by the moſt powerful ſanctions; it raiſes around it's votaries a ſtrong defence againſt the pernicious maxims, and contagious manners of the world, by placing continually in their view thoſe awful and ſublime objects which are forgotten or overlooked by the reſt of mankind, amidſt the purſuits or pleaſures of life.

The reflections you make on that indiſcreet zeal, which leads many well meaning, but weak people, to introduce religious ſubjects into all companies, and the peculiar language of Scripture into all converſations, are extremely juſt.

This diſguſting practice betrays a want of good taſte, no leſs than of judgment, and has the worſt effects imaginable, particularly on the minds of young people. The extravagance and hypocriſy of the fanatics, have left diſagreeable impreſſions on the minds of men, and given them a peculiar diſguſt to that ſtile of language they adopted. And, to make uſe of it on common occaſions, is to ſecure to one's ſelf the appellation either of fool or knave. It is long before the world, which has never been famous for candour, can ſhake off a prejudice ſo deeply rooted, and, alas! to this day, too often juſtified, by the harſh manners,

manners, and ſevere moroſe tempers, of many who profeſs ſuperior ſanctity.

As good advice is a diet I never greatly reliſhed myſelf, even when cooked in the moſt ſkillful manner, it goes againſt my conſcience to cram it ſo unmercifully down poor Harry's throat. I ſhall venture, however, to aſſure him, in the language of experience and truth, that, when the mind is ſupported by hope, and gently agitated by the pleaſing ſchemes for future enjoyment which it ſupplies, a ſtate of expectation is often productive of more happineſs than that of ſecure poſſeſſion.

You deſire me to tell you all the news of the country; I would willingly gratify my dear Lucy, but death and marriage have ſo contracted the circle of my acquaintance, that I am totally ignorant of any occurrences beyond the farm-yard, the church, or the garden. Theſe, in general,

bound my travels; and I am ſunk into that very character, which, in the days of our lofty ideas, and ſublime ſentiments, we uſed moſt to deride and contemn—an indolent, inſipid, uſeleſs old maid.—What, then, remains for me, thus retired from the world, neglected and forgotten? To nouriſh a gloomy unſocial temper, to indulge in peeviſh complaints, to become the victim of diſcontent, idleneſs, and imaginary evils, to live unbleſt, to die unregretted? No, my Lucy. Be it mine to ſoften the domeſtic pains, to ſhare the domeſtic pleaſures, of my real friends; to ſoothe the little cares of life, to reconcile its differences, unite its competitions, explain its miſunderſtandings; to watch over the immortal intereſts of thoſe, who, engroſſed by the world, diſregard them themſelves; to promote them by my advice, my example, my prayers. Theſe laudable, theſe important ends, my Lucy, by being uniformly purſued, will give a reliſh to life, even after

after its exquiſite pleaſures are flown: Theſe, I truſt, will ever endear the character and excite the activity, even of your old and indolent aunt,

HELEN MARIA STANLEY.

LETTER XCV.

Lady Mortimer to Miſs Herbert.

Harwood.

I confeſs it is with reaſon you accuſe me of forgetfulneſs; but, though I have omitted mentioning Mrs Clifford for ſome time, I have not neglected to pay her thoſe attentions which are due to merit and misfortunes like her's.

Laſt week, Sir Charles told me, that he thought it would be a more eligible plan to fix a ſalary on Mrs Clifford, than bring her into the family, where the impertinent

curioſity of ſervants might lay her under a diſagreeable reſtraint; but propoſed giving her the choice of her way of life. Accordingly, we paid her a viſit laſt Thurſday, when Sir Charles told her, that there was a pretty farm-houſe and garden belonging to him, about a mile from Harwood, perfectly retired, and ſweetly ſituated, which, if ſhe preferred it to living in our family, ſhould be fitted up for her without delay.

I really do not think, continued he, that it would be proper for your little Clara to be in the houſe with ſo many ſervants; and it would rather be a diſadvantage to her, to be educated in a ſtile ſuperior to what ſhe would be obliged to live in, on going abroad into the world.

The worthy Mrs Clifford thanked him with tears, and embraced with much joy a ſcheme quite ſuited to her inclination; which

which at once ſecured to her the retirement ſhe loved, and obtained for her child the advantages of occaſional ſociety, and the protection of friends, on whoſe prudence and generoſity ſhe could rely.

Accordingly, ſhe removed laſt week to her new habitation; and yeſterday I paid her my firſt viſit.

On aſking her how ſhe liked her retreat? "With my whole heart," replied ſhe; "but your Ladyſhip little ſuſpects in what a neighbourhood you have placed me; I am, it ſeems, within a few ſteps of Hell; and the ſimple cottagers have already offered to conduct me thither by the ſhorteſt way."

To explain this, Maria, I muſt inform you, that the country-people, ever prone to ſuperſtition, have beſtowed this tremendous epithet on a deep cavern, into which

a beautiful caſcade pours with great velocity, and which they affirm to be without a bottom. The ſcenery round it is romantick and picturesque, in the higheſt degree. On one ſide riſe green ſloping hills, ſhagged with wood, and on the other is ſtretched a fertile plain, through which winds a beautiful river. The fantaſtic roots of oak, wreathing themſelves among the broken rocks, which are adorned with a variety of wild flowers and ſhrubs; the diſtant proſpect of mountains, bleak and barren as thoſe deſcribed by the Son of Fingal, and of valleys, "where the tempeſt whiſtles through the long graſs, and the thiſtle ſhakes its lone head to the blaſt," combine to form a proſpect ſublime, and romantic beyond deſcription.

When I was firſt ſolicited to go to Hell, I ſtarted with horror; but, like other ſimple votaries of his Subterranean Highneſs, after being perſuaded to take the firſt

ſtep,

ſtep, I found the way ſo eaſy and pleaſant, that I never ſtopped till I reached the bank of the river. The appearance of the ferryman and his boat, the oppoſite fields, and novelty of the whole ſcene, introduced into my mind a new train of ideas; I could not help imagining myſelf on the verge of the Pagan Infernum; that it was the waves of the Styx on which I was about to launch, and ſurly old Charon, whom I waited for to convey me acroſs the ferry. This idea took ſuch poſſeſſion of my mind, that no ſooner was I compoſed to ſleep laſt night, than fancy preſented me with a dream, of which I ſhall give you the particulars.

The firſt thought that ſtruck me, on finding myſelf on the borders of the other world, was the appearance I was about to make before Radamanthus. In the moſt violent hurry and agitation, I began to rummage my pockets for my accounts, which I knew

muſt

muſt immediately be laid before my judge. But, what was my ſhame and aſtoniſhment, on recollecting that, though I had always intended putting them in order, I had delayed ſo long, that I had forgotten at leaſt one-half of the articles; and that the looſe memorandums which ſtill remained in my poſſeſſion were ſo blotted and unconnected, it was impoſſible to make any thing of them.

Upon this I began to bewail my folly, with all the anguiſh of unavailing regret; which being obſerved by Charon, he reminded me, with a moſt malignant ſneer, "that I need not diſcompoſe myſelf for want of my accounts, as there was a little book, called Conſcience, in which every thought of my heart was faithfully regiſtered; and which, though I had thrown it aſide for ſome time, I ſhould find reſtored the moment I entered the court of Rhadamanthus.

To divert my thoughts from the diſmal ſubject which now occupied them, I began to aſk ſome queſtions at Charon, particularly, What was the reaſon his boat was ſo poorly freighted?

I ſoon found that I had touched his ſore heel; for he replied, with a dreadful imprecation, and a frown dark as the waves of Cocytus, "That he was poſitively reſolved to throw up his commiſſion, and continue no longer conductor to Hell: That his boat was of no uſe, now that Paſſion and Prejudice had taken the lead of mankind; and Infidelity diſcovered a new road through the gate of Licentiouſneſs, where Remorſe ſtood ready to conduct them to Deſpair, from whom they learned a very ſhort paſſage into the realms of Pluto, by the way of Suicide.

The violent manner in which he pronounced theſe words awoke me; but the effect

effect they produced in my mind is not to be described. I started with horror at recollection of my late situation; I resolved to be warned by my dream to prepare for that hour which must determine my everlasting state, and when, with triumph, or with shame, I must stand in the presence of Him, from whose impartial sentence there lies no appeal.

Adieu, Maria, adieu. You are one of those on whom my heart relies for smoothing the path of life, in which I have already encountered many difficulties, and know not how many more may yet await me.

Let your friendship support me on my journey, endear its pleasures, beguile its fatigues, and sweeten its close. The conviction that I already possess it gives pride and joy to the heart of

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER

LETTER XCVI.

Miſs Lucy Herbert to Mrs Helen Maria Stanley.

London.

As my dear Aunt, by her kind reception of my letters, encourages me to write as often as my conſtant engagements will permit, I ſit down to inform her, that yeſterday I viſited Woolwich, a chief repoſitory of thoſe naval ſtores which conſtitute the defence of Britain, and Greenwich, the noble aſylum of thoſe aged heroes who have been its glory.

But how ſhall I deſcribe theſe monuments of Britiſh wealth and munificence! I can only tell you, in general, that, in Greenwich Park, the ſimple and the grand are ſo happily united, as to heighten the effect of each other; and that the Hoſpital (in

fact a magnificent palace) is of such magnitude, that six hundred men dine in one hall. That it contains (if my information be good) two thousand five hundred souls; and that its annual expence is about eighty thousand pounds.

As I stood at the highest part of the Park, surveying the rich and varied landscape before me; the sails appearing from behind the trees, and then vanishing, as if by enchantment: As I looked round on the old "hearts of oak," and saw contentment smiling sweetly on every weather beaten brow; as I visited their little cabins, adorned with trophies from both Indies, with paintings of their former floating habitations, with sculpture of Paris plaister, and literature, from "Black eyed Susan," and the "Sailor's last farewell," I felt in my heart such a mixture of melancholy complacency and tenderness, that I could hardly forbear exclaiming, Why is

not

not my dear Aunt here! She is formed to reliſh this ſcene.

I had many delightful communings with the old tars; and the feelings they awakened were worth "a thouſand homilies." One Brown-face told me, with a ſtrut and a ſwell of his old boſom, "that he thanked God he had had the honour to be wounded in three engagements, and to drink ſalt-water twenty-ſeven years, ſo he thought he had now a title to ſome freſh."

Another declined ſhewing the ladies the principal ward, "becauſe the ſtair would fatigue them;" but, in the honeſt pride of his heart, led us half a mile round, to ſhew us his own cabin, which the ſly rogue had decked out with ſhreds of chintz, ivory boxes, pieces of mirrour, and ſuch gew-gaws, (as he ſaid), to pleaſe the women.

Whilſt I was gazing with ſilent ſatisfaction on a countenance full of benignity, and wondering at the attention with which a pair of dim eyes (that had once been bright) were ſurveying a ſet of China, neatly arranged on a ſmall wooden ſhelf. "Lookee, there now, Madam," ſaid the proprietor, "there is a ſet of tea-cups for ye! I would not give them to his Majeſty, God bleſs him! for twenty guineas of gold. I ſaw them made with my own eyes; and there, d'ye ſee, is my own and my wife's effigy—that is to ſay, (with a heavy ſigh), when ſhe was alive. I could not match them, God bleſs you, in all London." Jack was certainly right. In reality, none but themſelves could be their parallel. I ſecretly rejoiced to think that, as they were out of the reach both of cats and of children, his poor harmleſs hobby might laſt as long as himſelf, and neither coſt his vanity a pang, nor his heart a ſigh.

And

And now let me reproach you for your long unkind ſilence. Is it, that you think your Lucy ſtands no longer in need of your admonitions, or is not ſufficiently grateful for thoſe you have beſtowed? Truſt me, theſe ſuſpicions are alike groundleſs. My mind is a ſoil ſo fruitful of follies, that it requires a hand like your's, equally diligent and judicious, to root out the weeds, and to plant in their ſtead all thoſe amiable virtues with which your own is ſo richly ſtored. But, I ſuppoſe, ſince I ſent you Rollin, you have abandoned your charge, for the ſake of meaſuring the pyramids of Egypt, or cutting a way for Hannibal over the Alps. Should I find that, by ſupplying you with amuſement, you are tempted to deprive me of inſtruction, I will certainly never furniſh you with any thing more ſerious or intereſting, than the Macaroni Magazine, or —the debates in parliament.

I am ſurpriſed and ſhocked with the number of beggars who croud the ſtreets here, in ſpite of the vaſt ſums annually given in charity. The marks of vice and exceſſive depravity which they bear about them, excite more diſguſt than compaſſion. In the country, we are charitable from feeling; in cities, we muſt be ſo from principle. In this reſpect, the wiſdom and the goodneſs of God are alike conſpicuous in the intellectual oeconomy. Tender impreſſions, in which the mind is paſſive, become weaker and weaker by repetition; whilſt frequent acts ſtrengthen and confirm good habits. Thus, whilſt the ſight of human diſtreſs becomes leſs affecting by being familiar, the benevolent principle is ſtrengthened, by the habit of relieving it.

I do not think it neceſſary to quote authorities whenever I ſay a good thing. Sometimes I forget to whom I am indebted;

ed; at others, I flatter myself that I have no other authority than my own: But, if you love to see a great name tacked to the end of every wise sentence, you have only to place that of a Lock, a Sherlock, or a Butler, (to whom I believe it is due), to the above cited.

Though this day is appointed as a general fast, I feel no remorse for employing part of it in this manner, as writing is not the sin that most easily besets me, and I have had all the morning to repent of the others. As I waited in the passage for Maria to go to church, I could not help smiling, on hearing the footman ask the postilion, "What was the reason of two Sundays in the week?" "A very good reason," replied the other, "that people may go to church, and pray for the sins of the army." Now, if John's be a true state of the case, these appear to be in so thriving a condition, that I really do not think they require

require the aid of my prayers. They are ever your's, however, my dear Aunt, with ardour and ſincerity, for I am your affectionate and dutiful niece,

LUCY HERBERT.

LETTER XCVII.

Lady Mortimer to Miſs Herbert.

Harwood.

I thank my dear friend for her ſolicitude about my health, which is good, and my ſpirits, which, in general, are eaſy and ſerene.

Though the ſafety of the amiable Rivers cannot fail deeply to intereſt me, it is not on his account alone that I am in anxious expectation of news from America. It is generally thought that on the preſent important

portant criſis depends the fate of the Britiſh empire. After a progreſs ſo rapid, in luxury and refinement, we are taught, by the fate of other nations, to expect that it will have a quick decline. Whilſt we deplore our licentious principles, and diſſolute manners, as a nation, be it our care, as individuals, to ſtop the torrent of vice and folly, by cultivating every noble and generous ſentiment, and diſplaying a virtuous and exemplary conduct.

Sir Charles is gone to —— for a few days, on particular buſineſs. He flatters me moſt agreeably, by his impatience to return, and by aſſuring me that mine has ſpoiled him for reliſhing the converſation of all other women. It is certain, to thoſe accuſtomed to the ſociety of friends, that of mere acquaintance ſeems very inſipid.

At

Roſebank.

At length the long wiſhed packet from Charleſtown is come, and brings the agreeable accounts of the ſafe arrival of Lord Rivers.

He writes both to his father and ſiſter; gives a pleaſing deſcription of his voyage; ſays the ſea-air has been of the utmoſt conſequence to his health; and deſires Lady Sophia to aſſure me, that, in a very ſhort time, he will get rid of every uneaſineſs. —Generous, friendly Rivers! moſt grateful do I feel for this attention.

In the abſence of my huſband, I came here to ſpend the day with Mrs Clifford. She ſeems perfectly happy and contented.

Ah, my friend! what a criminal proſtitution of fortune is it, to ſpend as much on

on a week's amuſement as would ſerve to render ſuch worthy and virtuous people comfortable for a year!

While my kind hoſteſs is engaged in ſome domeſtic affairs, I take up my pen, and addreſs you with peculiar pleaſure, from her quiet manſion.

Cloſe by the window where I am now writing runs a tranſparent brook, with a ſoft murmur that ſoothes every thought to peace. Every object around conveys the idea of ſimplicity and rural quiet. One large tree ſhades a pool, where a woman is buſied in rinſing her linen. A little below, under a one arched bridge, where the water breaks over ſome rugged ſtones, the ſchool-boys, from the adjacent village, ſtand angling for minnows. The clack of a mill, and the ſound of the caſcade, I have formerly mentioned, complete the ruſtic

ſcene:

ſcene. Methinks, Maria, with health and peace, and a few agreeable aſſociates, one might——

Tueſday.

I was interrupted yeſterday by Mrs Clifford, who entered the room in great haſte, telling me, that a chariot had broke down on the road, at a little diſtance, and that a countryman, who was preſent at the accident, came to inform her, that the gentleman to whom it belonged was much hurt; and begged permiſſion to reſt a little at her houſe, till another carriage ſhould be procured. We inſtantly deſpatched James, who attended me, to aſſure the gentleman of every aſſiſtance in our power, and to entreat him to accept of ſuch accommodation as Mrs Clifford's houſe afforded, till a carriage ſhould be brought from Harwood.

In a few minutes the door opened, and an old man entered, leaning on James, with

with a ſtriking and graceful figure, but a countenance ſtern and unpleaſing. He ſeemed to walk with great pain, took little notice of Mrs Clifford or me, and no ſooner was ſeated on the couch, than he began to curſe the bad roads, rail againſt his driver's careleſſneſs, and concluded with ſaying, "Did you know what a damned unlucky fellow, Ladies, you have got into your houſe, you would turn me out of it, leſt it ſhould be on fire before morning. Devil take me if I don't believe that all the monſters of the zodiac were in conjunction at my birth."

We were both at a loſs what reply to make to this ſtrange addreſs; but the ſurgeon from the village juſt then making his appearance, we retired, and left the old gentleman to his care.

Upon receiving a meſſage to return, we did ſo. "I told you how it would be,"

exclaimed he; "the ſmall bones of my ancle broke; next time it will be my neck I ſuppoſe."

On ſeeing little Clara enter, "Come hither, my pretty chit," cried he, "you ſhall be my nurſe. How old is the little huſſey, pray? The ſweet child, to my utter aſtoniſhment, went up, and looking in the old man's face, "Mamma ſays I am almoſt five, Sir, and ſhe never told a lie in all her life, and neither will I." "I doubt that much," replied the humouriſt, with a grin of approbation; "but, however, I do think you are too young yet to flatter, and wheedle, and deceive, like the reſt of your treacherous ſex. Pray, will you have me to be your huſband, and you ſhall ride in a coach?" "No, thank you, Sir," replied the child, "but you may be my Papa, if you pleaſe." "Aye, aye," reſumed he, "all art and cunning the moment they burſt the ſhell! And, pray, which

which of theſe Ladies is your Mamma?" "This, here, Sir, is my own Mamma, and Lady Mortimer is my t'other Mamma." "Lady Mortimer!" exclaimed he, with a look of aſtoniſhment, "Is your name Lady Mortimer?" I anſwered in the affirmative. He held out his hand: "Come hither, child." I roſe; he took hold of mine, and looking earneſtly in my face, "Yes," continued he, with tears in his eyes, "She is, ſhe is the daughter of my poor unhappy, beloved"—then pauſing, "Do you know, Madam, I am Lord Belmount, your uncle, and can give you fifty thouſand pounds if I pleaſe. I ſee I ſhall not long want an heir to my eſtate. Nay, never bluſh, child. Harkee, your father was a damn'd raſcal—but no matter; you may be a good girl for all that. I did intend to ſee with my own eyes, whether Sir Charles and you deſerved all I heard of you, before I diſcovered myſelf; but, if I propoſe one thing, the direct contrary is

ſure to happen: And I believe in my conſcience, the ſureſt way I could get to heaven, would be to ſet out poſt to the devil."

As I now began to underſtand a little of my Uncle's character, I endeavoured to accommodate myſelf to his humour, and told him that, in his next journey, I hoped he would make Harwood his purgatory, or middle ſtate, when I would do all in my power to convince him, that he was not ſo very unfortunate as he thought himſelf, by introducing him to a new relation, who, I hoped, would ſeem worthy of his friendſhip.

At that inſtant Robert came with the coach, and informed me that Sir Charles was juſt arrived. As it was impoſſible to remove Lord Belmount, I inſiſted on leaving James to attend him, though he declared he would have no nurſe but little Clara,

Clara, whoſe frankneſs had quite captivated him.

This morning Sir Charles and I waited on him. He received us with much kindneſs, but talked to Sir Charles in a manner which obliged me to quit the room. What pleaſure, my dear Maria, can a man find, in putting a modeſt woman out of countenance? Does the circumſtance of her being married authoriſe ſuch licentious freedoms? For my part, there is a ſacredneſs in the name of wife, which makes me a thouſand times more eaſily hurt, by any inſult of this kind, than formerly: And they muſt be ſtrangers to the nature of true delicacy, who ſuppoſe it leſs eſſential to the married than the virgin ſtate.

Lord Belmount expreſſes much ſatisfaction in the care and attention of Mrs Clifford; and, from the great partiality he ſhews to Clara, I am inclined to hope he

may be led to do ſomething for her mother. His fortune is large, and my good offices ſhall not be wanting to engage him to do ſo. Adieu, dear Maria, adieu.

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER XCVIII.

Miſs Lucy Herbert to Mrs Helen Maria Stanley.

London.

The reception you give my letters, my dear Aunt, makes me both happy and vain, and induces me to take up my pen as often as I have a moment's leiſure. Indeed, the avocations here are ſo many, that I can hardly find time to ſay my prayers, unleſs when I ſend them poſt to Heaven by way of ejaculation.

Tell

Tell my uncle, he does me great injuſtice in thinking I forget him, becauſe I do not communicate to him all the wonders of this little world. I know he is a philoſopher, and, as ſuch, that it would reflect on his underſtanding to believe any thing he has not ſeen. And, though I may venture to pour my intelligence into the cheriſhed ears of ſweet credulity, he ſurely would not have me ſuſpect him of any degree of faith unbecoming a gentleman; and, to credit all my information, requires a larger portion than uſually falls to the ſhare of ſuch enlightened minds.

Our enormities, my dear Aunt, in the way of dreſs and amuſement, do indeed exceed all belief, and call loudly for the laſh of criticiſm. The keen, the delicate edge of Addiſon's wit would have been thrown away, on the groſs abſurdities of our days. I am juſt returned from the Opera, fatigued and diſguſted beyond meaſure.

meaſure. Heavens! how aſtoniſhing, that people ſhould boaſt the privilege of reaſon, and yet ſubmit with patience to behold this laſt inſult on taſte and underſtanding.

The firſt piece I witneſſed was that of Jeruſalem Delivered. I was told it was a ſerious opera, and, accordingly, before the curtain drew up, had compoſed every muſcle of my face into a correſponding gravity. Judge, if my riſible faculties could remain undiſturbed, when I ſaw the noble, dauntleſs, heroic Tancred, ſwim in, with a hoop petticoat, brocade-coat of mail, and viſor glittering with diamonds, and heard him ſqueek forth his unquenchable love of glory, in a recitative ſo ſoft, it might have been miſtaken for a funeral dirge. His martial ardor, too, ſeemed to receive ſuch a violent ſhock, by the breaking of a ſtring in a huge baſs viol, that the audience were led to ſuſpect, from his viſible

viſible diſcompoſure, that this boaſtful hero was a mere bravo.

The next opera preſented two conſcious lovers on the very brink of an explanation. During a long ſymphony, the lady ſtood on the tiptoe of expectation; and the impatient gallant ſeemed juſt ready to pour forth his tranſports in due form; when, to the amazement of the ſpectators, he faced about to the ſtage, and addreſſed a moſt divine air to an oiled-paper moon, which at that inſtant roſe in cloudleſs majeſty, behind one of the ſcenes.

In the laſt piece, I was dreadfully alarmed by the entrance of an enraged and jealous lover, who, fierce as a tyger, flew to ſeize his rival, and plunge his dagger in his breaſt; when lo! arreſted by his inchanting accents, he ſtood meek and ſilent, by the ſide of the hated raviſher; who not only

only diverted him from his bloody purpose, but sung him out of it altogether.

If one has the misfortune to be but imperfectly skilled in the Italian language, it is impossible to guess the drift of the author, as all the passions that can assail the human heart have here but one mode of expressing themselves.

A bravo assaults with the accents of an angel; a rival gives the lie with a trill and a cadence; and a man's mistress sings her denial so melodiously, that I do not see how it is possible he can believe her in earnest.

I am always so, when I assure my dear Aunt of the respectful gratitude and affection of her

LUCY HERBERT.

LETTER

LETTER XCIX.

Lady Mortimer to Miſs Herbert.

Harwood.

Lord Belmount being quite recovered, came here, and ſpent ſome days, much more to my ſatisfaction than I could have believed poſſible. Little Clara was his companion. I am pleaſed to ſee his growing fondneſs for the child, and venture to form the moſt happy preſages, reſpecting her future fortune, from that circumſtance.

My uncle ſeems to be one of thoſe ſtrange people, who hide a tender heart under a rough and even rude manner; who, by aſſuming a certain bluntneſs and peculiarity of behaviour, think themſelves privileged

privileged to ſhock all their quiet unoffending neighbours, and ſay and do juſt what they pleaſe.

How many good people are there in the world, Maria, who, from want of that nice diſcernment, and quick ſenſe of propriety, which we denominate good taſte, or from little petulancies, and particularities of temper, would have rendered me moſt unhappy! The ſingular delicacy of Sir Charles's mind gives me a freedom and ſecurity in converſation with him, which is the very ſoul of ſocial intercourſe. And I think I may venture to promiſe ſo far on our tempers, that we will never give each other pain, either by wilfulneſs, caprice, or unkindneſs.

For this beſt of men it has been reſerved to reſtore me to the enjoyment of life, and even awaken a wiſh that it may be prolonged. And, oh! to me may it be granted

granted to ſweeten every ſubſequent hour of his! To anticipate his wiſhes, ſmile away his cares, ſoothe his inquietudes, and, by finding my own happineſs in promoting his, to render exiſtence a bleſſing to both.

I cannot better deſcribe my preſent ſituation, than in the words of Lord Bolingbroke: "I enjoy that quietneſs of mind, which is never greatly interrupted by the cares of the world, and which often riſes to that chearfulneſs which diſpoſes me to wiſh well to all around me."

We are juſt returned from church, where we have heard a noble diſcourſe, and moſt heavenly muſic. I know many people would have nothing to mingle in our religious worſhip but what is purely ſpiritual. For my part, I do not expect to ſee mankind, on earth, exalted to the dignity and privileges of angels. And ſo great an advocate am I for intereſting the exter-

nal ſenſes in our devotional exerciſes, that I would wiſh to take all the aids to mine which the fine arts, eſpecially muſic, could ſupply.

How much, Dear Maria, are we indebted to the divine goodneſs for minds formed to reliſh a ſpecies of happineſs, which, I fear, is but little known to the generality of mankind! Some reſtleſs care, ſome ſecret apprehenſion, ſome hidden ſource of diſguſt or uneaſineſs, ſeems to diſturb the mind of almoſt every perſon I meet. Whilſt, in the pleaſing care of rendering each other happy, the moderate and grateful enjoyment of the goods of fortune, and the regular diſcharge of religious, ſocial, and domeſtic duties, we taſte that ſweet and ſerene contentment, that approaches neareſt to what we imagine muſt conſtitute the repoſe of the bleſſed.

May

May it be our care to improve thoſe affections and diſpoſitions the Almighty hath beſtowed on us, that the connection which here makes our whole happineſs may be worthy of forming a part of it hereafter. So prays fervently your

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER C.

Lady Mortimer to Miſs Herbert.

Harwood.

It will give pleaſure to the moſt benevolent of my friends to be aſſured that I am continuing, with a grateful heart, to enjoy the various bleſſings with which I am ſurrounded. The happineſs of my huſband redoubles mine. Oh, Maria! it is a noble, a generous joy I feel in conferring it.

My uncle has again paid us a viſit; he is kindly partial to me, and avoids thoſe

little improprieties in converſation which he ſaw gave me pain. He told me, that he perceived I could not bear a jeſt; but he forgave me, as my ſhyneſs was the effect of my country breeding, not of affectation.

His manners have all that roughneſs and ſeverity, which is uſually acquired by living alone; and which the tender and domeſtic connections inſenſibly wear away, or convert into that yielding complacency, that gives grace to virtue, and in mixed ſocieties in ſome meaſure ſupplies the abſence of it.

He ſeemed very inquiſitive about Mrs Clifford, whoſe ſtory I related to him, without mentioning the name of him who was the cauſe of her misfortunes. Next morning he came into my dreſſing-room, and taking out a paper, "Here, child," ſaid he, "we muſt reſpect people's feelings as well as their neceſſities; give this to your

your friend when I am gone—to-morrow, I mean, for I have no thought of undertaking my laſt journey yet.

" You are a noble creature, and above the little dirty ſelfiſh arts of your ſex. Beſides, your boy ſhall have enough. Remember I won't have a girl. My little nurſe will ſerve all the purpoſes of a daughter. I might have delayed giving her a portion (like others) till I could make no uſe of it myſelf; but I chooſe rather to ſee people look happy while I live, than be aſſured they will do ſo at my funeral."

On examining my depoſit, I found in it a bank-bill for a thouſand pounds. This generous gift will make Mrs Clifford perfectly eaſy through life, and remove from her breaſt every anxious care, reſpecting a future proviſion for her child.

Ten thouſand bleſſings on the donor! Take thy joke, good Lord Belmount, and

let none dare to condemn thee, till they can ſay, "I am free from weakneſs." Mean time, let thy diſintereſted kindneſs be a ſanction for thine.

The melancholy truths you tell me, with reſpect to the licentiouſneſs and univerſal diſſipation that prevail in polite circles, make me ſhrink with apprehenſion, from the proſpect of entering that world, where ſo many ſources of diſguſt ariſe, and ſo many dangers await me. The profligate manners of thoſe whoſe rank and fortune render the influence of their example not only contagious but extenſive, is never enough to be deplored. Perhaps the evil might be remedied in part, were gentlemen in the country to educate their children, particularly girls, with proper teachers, under their own inſpection, inſtead of ſending them to crouded boarding-ſchools and academies, where the bad

diſpoſi-

diſpoſitions of one child often ſerve to corrupt the whole.

Conſcious, my dear Maria, that I have not ſtrength to ſtruggle with ſo many adverſaries as the great world ſupplies, I ſeek for ſhelter in the quiet of retirement. In doing ſo, I may perhaps be accuſed of betraying a feeble and daſtardly ſpirit; but, if one is ſenſible of one's own weakneſs, is it not wiſer to ſhun the combat, than riſk being foiled in an unequal conteſt? If I cannot merit the laurel wreathe, let me ſtrive to cheriſh the olive-branch.

The amiable family at the Grove have been in dreadful anxiety for ſome days. By the laſt expreſſes from America, the ſituation of the two armies was ſuch as made it univerſally believed that a general engagement was inevitable.

O Maria! a thouſand gloomy preſages cloud my dejected ſoul, as often as I think on the amiable unfortunate Rivers. Dear and reſpectable friend! if poſſible, more dear, more deſerving than ever, may Heaven long preſerve thee, at once to ſhare and conſtitute the happineſs of thy family, and the friends who truly love thee!

No longer conſcious of entertaining a ſentiment for which I ought to bluſh, there is a tenderneſs, a melancholy, connected with my friendſhip for Rivers, which has ſomething in it inexpreſſibly affecting. It is a mixture of gratitude, admiration, and pity, of which none can judge, but ſuch as have been placed in our very peculiar circumſtances, and are acquainted, by experience, with the moſt tender ſentiments of which the human heart is ſuſceptible. Friendſhip for you, warm and ſincere, holds, and ever will hold, a principal place

place in mine; for I am unfeignedly your affectionate

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER CI.

Lady Mortimer to Miſs Herbert.

Harwood.

Yes, Maria, I love, I tenderly love Sir Charles. The generoſity of his conduct laid the foundation of my eſteem; his care to render me happy daily enhances my gratitude; and the delicacy of his affection has awakened in my boſom feelings which I thought were for ever baniſhed from thence.

To a heart ſo long a ſtranger to pleaſure, there is a charm in loving and being beloved, in feeling one's ſelf of the laſt importance to the object of one's beſt affections,

tions, that is a thouſand times more delightful and endearing than any other earthly enjoyment.

Though, in ſpite of every effort, the memory of the paſt will at times obtrude itſelf, yet ſuch is the effect of the conſtant chearfulneſs of Sir Charles's temper, and his ſolicitude to procure me every ſpecies of amuſement, that mine inſenſibly catches the tone of his mind.

My tranquility is uninterrupted, my ſpirits eaſy, my fancy occupied with the moſt agreeable images, and my heart contented, and full of hope. What a happy, happy change, Maria, from that joyleſs apathy, that liſtleſs dejection, to which you formerly beheld me a prey!

Sir Charles and I are juſt returned from viſiting a remarkable fine ſeat in this country, where Engliſh magnificence is profuſely,

fuſely, but, I think, injudiciouſly diſplayed. I was a good deal diſguſted with what ſeemed to me a violation of that unity of deſign which characteriſes a juſt taſte, and that obtruſive diſplay of art, which generally betrays a bad one. Upon reflection, however, this may not be ſo ill-judged as I at firſt imagined. In this country, the productions of Nature are ſo various, grand, and beautiful, that perhaps the only way to increaſe the effect of her charms, is to oppoſe art as a foil to her. Certain it is, that, after being tired with level lawns, regular gardens, ſmooth canals, and gilded temples, I returned with redoubled delight and admiration to the roaring torrent, the miſt-clad hill, the wild wood, and winding ſtream.

The Cleveland family were of our party. Rivers, the amiable Rivers, was the ſubject of our converſation, as often as Lady Sophia and I found an opportunity of withdrawing from the company. Her gentle heart

heart is overwhelmed with anxiety on his account. She ſays there is a deſpondency and dejection viſible in the ſtile of his two laſt letters, that exceedingly alarms her. Alas! what can I ſay to give her comfort!

I have been enjoying a ſolitary walk in the wood. How ſweetly in harmony with my ſoul are the ſolemn objects I have been contemplating! The moon, ſlowly riſing behind the hill, is enlightening, with her trembling beams, the ſmooth ſurface of the water, and checkering the wood with a thouſand fantaſtic ſhapes. How ſtill is every object! The ſilence and ſolitude that ſurround me, are delightfully in uniſon with the ſerenity of my mind. I look back, Maria! a tear ſteals down my cheek, and a ſigh ſwells my boſom; but there is a luxury inexplicable in ſuch a mild ſorrow, as reflection now excites in that of your friend.

Think

Think not that mine is wholly confined to this low and limited ſphere. I lift my eyes to unnumbered worlds, that roll in ſilent Majeſty through the vaſt expanſe of heaven, and my ſoul to Him who created them.

How wonderful are thy works, Lord God Almighty, in wiſdom haſt thou made them all!

And yet, my friend, there are, whoſe narrow capacities comprehend not a general emolument; who derogate from the power and wiſdom of the Supreme Being, by ſuppoſing all thoſe glorious luminaries created for the benefit of a ſingle order of exiſtences. Blind and ſelfiſh! your adorations ariſe from conceptions of the Deity, which in effect render him leſs worthy of being adored. It is thus that the wiſdom of God makes even the weakneſs and preſumption of men to praiſe him.

Farewell, my reaſonable, my pious friend! I write to you the thought of the moment: To apologiſe for addreſſing to you thoſe that are ſerious, would be to inſult your underſtanding, as well as to injure your friendſhip. My eſteem of the one, and gratitude for the other, ſhall be as laſting as the life of your

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER CII.

Lady Mortimer to Miſs Herbert.

Harwood.

Fatigued, for ſome days paſt, with the ſociety of people but little agreeable or intereſting to me, on their leaving Harwood this morning, I felt like one eſcaped from priſon. I rambled into the wood; the ſun ſhone with that mild luſtre peculiar to this

this ſeaſon; I was never weary of congratulating myſelf on the length of the day before me, and ſpent the firſt hours of it in planning employment for thoſe that were to ſucceed. They are come to a cloſe; and, on inquiring how they have been filled up, I find they have paſſed as in a dream, of which hardly one trace remains,—judge what ſatisfaction I can have on the review.

Is not this, my friend, a juſt emblem of life? Are not its firſt years ſpent in learning how to live? Does not the future employ all our hopes and deſires? Is not the preſent ſuffered to ſteal away unnoticed, unimproved, and even unenjoyed: And does not life itſelf come to an end, before we have attained the true art of living?

I have juſt parted with the amiable Lady Sophia. Sir Charles is gone to attend her home. I think ſhe has infected me with

with her melancholy apprehenſions. Suſpenſe, added to fear, ſeems almoſt too much for a mind ſo femininely ſenſible as her's. May pitying Heaven relieve her, and avert every evil from the brother of her heart! Oh may he yet return, the chearful, engaging, eſtimable Rivers, that firſt I knew him.

Sir Charles is arrived. He looks up to my window. I underſtand his ſmile of invitation, and will accompany him to our evening walk. How eaſy is obedience when love makes duty delightful!

Ah, Maria! what do I ſee! Lord Cleveland's ſervant in tears! He delivers a packet to James—Sir Charles enters—Oh! Heaven ſupport us! my fears are juſtified! —Rivers, the beſt and deareſt!—O Maria! Rivers is no more!——

LETTER

LETTER CIII.

Sir Charles Mortimer to Miſs Herbert.

Harwood.

The incloſed letter, my dear Madam, will probably render further information ſuperfluous. You will ſee by it what an irreparable loſs his country, family, and friends, have ſuſtained, by the death of the moſt excellent of men, the gallant, generous, noble Rivers!—Oh, Miſs Herbert! what heart but muſt ſympathize in a ſorrow ſo extreme, yet ſo reaſonable, as that of his deſolate family! I fear my Julia feels it too deeply. Though prepared by her fears to expect the fatal news, the ſuddenneſs of it ſo entirely overcame her ſpirits, that, on entering her room, I found her juſt ſinking from her chair, and fortunately reached it in time to prevent her falling to the ground.

She is quite compoſed, but ſo greatly afflicted, that I will make no apology for quitting her friend, to try, by ſharing, to ſoothe the ſorrows of the moſt loved and deſerving of the human race.

Do me the juſtice, dear Miſs Herbert, to place amongſt the moſt ſincere of your friends, for I am truly

Your reſpectful, affectionate,

And very humble ſervant,

CHARLES MORTIMER.

LETTER CIV.

Lady Mortimer to Miſs Herbert.

Harwood.

Maria! what a dark, what a myſterious plan is that of Providence! The good, the exemplary are taken away; the wicked live, nay

nay triumph in their crimes! What need have we of the anchor of hope, to hold us firm amidſt the ſtorms of adverſity! what need of the proſpect of the next world to ſupport us under the complicated trials of this!

Sir Charles, ever kind and watchful, inſiſts on my quitting my pen. His tender anxieties ought to be quieted; they affect me deeply. I look up, and ſee the tear of ſympathy trembling in his eye: I ſtart at the recollection, that Mortimer, like Rivers, is mortal. I ſay to myſelf, if I linger here a few years more, my age will be without friends!——

Yet, let me not ſay ſo. There is one friend, the friend of human kind, the friend both of ſoul and body, on whom I may and will depend. O bleſſed reliance! of which, neither time, accident, nor death can deprive me! which is not affected by the

the changes of this tranſient ſcene, and the object of which becomes more precious to the ſoul, in proportion as the glory and excellence of all terreſtrial objects vaniſh away.

Sir Charles ſends Sally to entreat me to have done. She ſhall tranſcribe the fatal packet; I am really unequal to the taſk. Your

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER CV.

Lady Sophia Rivers to Lady Mortimer.

The moſt heavy tidings that ever pierced the heart of an afflicted father reached mine laſt night. He did not find courage to communicate them till I returned home this morning.

Our

Our diſtreſs may be conceived, but not deſcribed.

Perhaps, my dear Lady Mortimer, it may be ſafeſt for us all to meet now, when our grief can admit of no addition.

Read the incloſed. Oh, how it will affect your gentle heart! Mine longs to mingle its ſorrows with your's; but a father, ſinking under intolerable anguiſh, demands all my duty and care. Ah! would to heaven I could alleviate his ſufferings, by taking them on myſelf! Alas! the weight of my own is more than I can well ſupport.

I know your compaſſionate heart would indulge the fulneſs of mine; but I am unable to write on this ſubject, or think of any other. Pray for me, my deareſt, kindeſt friend: I have much need of comfort from Heaven, for I ſhall find none on earth.

Oh,

Oh, Lady Mortimer! you knew his virtues, you will cheriſh his memory. And whilſt, like me, you ſtrive to forget your ſelfiſh ſorrow, to rejoice in the ſecure felicity of the moſt exalted of the human race, you will pity the deſolate, the diſconſolate ſiſter he has left behind.

SOPHIA RIVERS.

LETTER CVI.

Captain Stanley to Lady Sophia Rivers.

Charleſtown.

The fatal news I am about to communicate, can neither be alleviated by caution, nor rendered leſs grievous by delay. Unhappy am I, in being forced to become the meſſenger of ſuch diſtreſſing intelligence!

Deareſt

Deareſt Lady Sophia, let me conjure you to ſummon your utmoſt fortitude, whilſt you read, that the beſt of men, the brother whom you fondly loved, expired in my arms, on Tueſday morning, the of laſt. By his deſire I addreſs you on this mournful occaſion. Alas! what can I ſay to alleviate your ſorrow?

I feel myſelf quite unable to offer you that conſolation, which I have not yet found myſelf, from the dictates of reaſon. Let us ſeek it in the hopes of religion; theſe are your's, and they will not fail you at this moſt trying criſis.

After the firſt violence of grief is abated, I know you will find a ſad ſatisfaction in learning all the melancholy particulars. Anxious to adminiſter to your afflicted heart, the only comfort now in my power to give—the only tribute I can pay, to the memory of the deareſt of friends, and braveſt

braveſt of men, I proceed to the diſmal recital.

The moment I heard Lord Rivers was returned to America, I flew to meet him, too well aſſured, that, under the preſſure of ſo heavy a diſappointment, he would ſtand in need of all the ſupport friendſhip can ſupply. I was exceedingly ſtruck with his appearance, which betrayed no marks of violent or agitating ſorrow, but far worſe, of a calm and ſettled deſpair.

He gave me a moſt affecting account of his laſt interview with Lady Mortimer; and, at the concluſion of it, "Stanley," ſaid he, "to have remained in England, would have been to increaſe my own miſery, by diſturbing the peace of that moſt angelic woman. Hope in this world I have none. What a wretch were I, after the avowal ſhe has ſo nobly made me, could I indulge a wiſh to ſee her leſs perfect?

fect? No, Stanley, I am incapable of such baseness. No longer will I oppose the will of Heaven. But oh, may that Being who has so sorely afflicted me abridge my trial; nor condemn me to drag on a joyless existence—an exile from my country—a stranger to peace—forever banished from her, whose affection was—O Stanley! is my ALL."

The very next day, a secret and important expedition was concerted by Lord M—— and other officers, when your brother eagerly solicited permission to conduct the party. In vain his worthy patron endeavoured to dissuade him from the hazardous attempt; he was determined; and nothing could prevail with him to relinquish this opportunity of distinguishing himself.

The attack was made, and ſucceeded: But dearly did theſe conquerors purchaſe victory, by a loſs never to be repaired.

Your gallant brother was brought home mortally wounded, and the ball could not be extracted, without hazard of inſtant death.

At his own deſire, he was brought back in a litter to Charleſtown.

Entirely ignorant of the whole affair, judge of my ſituation, when his ſervant, with a countenance impreſſed with horror, entered my apartment, and, breathleſs with haſte, intreated me to come to his maſter without a moment's delay. I found him lying on his bed, ſupported by pillows. He held out his feeble arms to embrace me; but the ghaſtly features of my friend ſo ſhocked me, that I could not utter a ſyllable.

"Stanley!

"Stanley! my beſt of friends," ſaid he, with a voice ſcarcely articulate, "Heaven in mercy has heard my prayers, and I ſhall ſoon be at reſt.—Nay, weep not, I conjure you, but rejoice at my releaſe." Then taking a letter which lay near him, and putting it into my hand, "to you, friend of my heart, to you I truſt this laſt, this only proof of—why ſhould I call it weakneſs?—of my unſhaken fidelity to my Julia. Bear witneſs, Stanley, that I have ever loved her as ſhe deſerved to be loved."

Then taking Lady Mortimer's picture from under his pillow, he kiſſed and gazed on it; and holding it between his trembling hands, "Oh," cried he, with a voice interrupted by ſighs, "may Heaven—may Heaven bleſs, comfort, protect my ſoul's dear treaſure! and, this ſhort life ended, unite again thoſe hearts, which not even death can entirely divide!"

At that moment the chaplain, who had been ſent for, came in; and, approaching the bed, graſped his hand in ſilent anguiſh.

"I requeſt the aid of your prayers, my pious friend," ſaid he. "Pray earneſtly that I may find mercy—and ſoon, very ſoon, be permitted to depart in peace—but ſpeak not of recovery—it is now impoſſible—I wiſh it not."

The worthy chaplain read the office for the ſick, with a voice ſcarcely articulate. At theſe words, "After this painful life is ended, may he dwell with Thee in life everlaſting," he was joined by your dying brother with a fervor which drew tears from the eyes even of the firmeſt.

The ſolemn ſervice ended, on ſeeing us all deeply affected, he gently chid us for "our miſtaken pity." He ſpoke with

with much tenderneſs of his father and ſiſters, lamented that they ſhould ſuffer from an event which would procure his freedom from ſuffering—his everlaſting felicity.

As he grew weaker every moment from loſs of blood, he often preſſed my hand feebly, without ſpeaking. At length, making an effort to raiſe himſelf, "I am going," ſaid he calmly, "and I am reſigned. Stanley—kindeſt, lateſt friend, farewell. May Almighty God bleſs you, and bleſs, oh bleſs forever my——my Julia!" Here his voice failing, he ſunk down, and breathed his laſt ſigh in my arms.

What a ſhort but glorious courſe has his been! Unequalled in diſpoſitions, eminent for talents, and ſtill more diſtinguiſhed by the juſt application of them; he never failed, by his modeſt virtues, to conciliate the affection even of thoſe who had not reſolution to follow his example. Who

would not covet a life ſo reſpectable, a death ſo glorious! Who would not aſpire to be ſo generally beloved—ſo juſtly lamented!

He was interred on Thurſday the 15th, with every mark of honour and diſtinction in the power of Lord M——, and his other ſorrowing friends, to beſtow.

As nothing connected with one ſo dear can be unintereſting, I ſhall make no apology to his amiable ſiſter for communicating the following little incident; judging, from its effect on my own feelings, how tenderly it muſt influence your's.

Very early, next morning, I repaired to the ſpot where the ſacred remains of my friend were depoſited; there to give vent to thoſe ſorrows, which it is pleaſing to indulge, but painful to expoſe to obſervation.

Scarcely had I entered the church-yard, when my attention was engaged by a ſoldier,

dier, who was ſitting at the foot of the grave, with his face covered with one hand, whilſt the other, from which his firelock had dropt, hung motionleſs by his ſide.

I ſtopped a moment, that I might not intrude on his ſorrow; but, on hearing the poor fellow ſob aloud, I drew nearer.

At the ſound of feet he ſtarted up, ſnatched his firelock, and haſtily wiping his face, was about to retire. But, perceiving him to be a private in your brother's regiment, I ſtopped him, and, with a lively impulſe of that ſympathetic kind which tells us we are all brothers, ſhook him cordially by the hand.

"Thomſon," ſaid I, "do not let me diſturb you. I come, like you, to drop a tear over the ſilent remains of the beſt and braveſt of men."

"Oh,

"Oh, Sir! O Captain Stanley," cried the poor fellow, graſping my hand,—"he was your friend! you knew—all the army knew how brave—but only wretched I knew how wonderfully good he was!"

Here a flood of tears choaked his utterance. "It is but two weeks ago," continued he, "ſince he that lies dead there, ſaved me both from ſhame and death. My poor wife expired that morning; my little boy was crying for hunger. I left the houſe in deſpair; when, ſeeing his honour at a diſtance, I took courage, came up to him, and told him my diſtreſs. He put two guineas into my hand; but unfortunately ſome of my comrades perſuaded me to go with them in the evening to an alehouſe, to try and chear me a little. I was ſoon tipſy, not being uſed to liquor. They held me long by force; at length I broke from them, and was hurrying home, when they overtook me, and trying to force me back,

back, a quarrel followed. Lord Rivers at that inſtant came up, and attempting to ſeparate us,—oh Sir! may God forgive me! miſtaking him for one of my companions, I gave him a blow. He ordered me into cuſtody; but, inſtead of the guard-room, he made me be carried to his own lodging.

"Next morning, when I grew ſober, I was like one diſtracted, and gave myſelf up for loſt. He entered the room; I fell on my knees, but he did not ſuffer me to ſpeak."

"Thomſon," ſaid he, "I forgive you; but remember your poor boy, who has none but you to depend on, and never again let me ſee you intoxicated." "I embraced his knees; but he broke from me, and would not hear me. Had he ordered me to receive ſome hundred laſhes, and

ex-

expoſed me to the whole regiment, I might in time have forgot both my crime and my puniſhment. But he forgave me—oh Captain Stanley! he forgave me without one reproach, and by Heavens I will never forget him!——And yet," pointing to the grave, "there, there he lies. I ſhall never hear him ſpeak—never bleſs him—never, never behold him more!"

Such, dear Lady Sophia, was the tenor of your lamented Rivers's conduct. Let us not indulge that exceſſive ſorrow, which would unfit us for imitating his example; but moderate our own, by reflecting that he is now beyond the reach of thoſe cruel pangs his death has inflicted; and forever exempted, both from the weakneſs and ſufferings of mortality.

I ſhall write to Lord Cleveland to morrow. Mean time, aſſure his Lordſhip, and your

your ſiſters, of the moſt ſincere condolence of

Your affectionate kinſman,
And moſt humble ſervant,
HENRY STANLEY.

LETTER CVII.

Lord Rivers to Lady Sophia Rivers.

(Incloſed in the preceding.)

Before this reach my beloved ſiſter, the ſorrows of her Rivers will be no more. Let that thought yield you conſolation, even amidſt the extreme diſtreſs which my death muſt occaſion to a heart ſo feelingly alive as your's.

Stanley will tell you all—my moments are precious—a few only remain: Let me ſeize one, to conjure my gentle Sophia, for

my

my ſake, to moderate her ſorrow, and ſtrive to repreſs it, in preſence of a father whom it will now be doubly incumbent on her to ſoothe, ſupport, and comfort.

To that reſpected parent you are now at liberty to reveal the only circumſtance I ever attempted concealing from him. He will approve, and gladly fulfil the laſt requeſt of his ſon, whoſe every wiſh he generouſly indulged, the moment it was known. You will learn it from the incloſed copy of my Will. The original is contained in the ſealed packet, directed to Lady Mortimer, which you will have the goodneſs to deliver. Cultivate, I entreat you, for that beſt of women, a friendſhip commenced in ſorrow, but which will contribute to your mutual comfort.

Sophia, my deareſt Sophia, farewell. A little while, and the word farewell ſhall never more be repeated.

LETTER

LETTER CVIII.

Lord Rivers to Lady Mortimer.

A few, a very few hours, and the fate of Rivers will perhaps be determined. An important redoubt of the enemy is to be attacked by day-break. The attempt is desperate; who then so fit to conduct it as I? I have requested, and obtained that honour. A few truly British soldiers, volunteers in this hazardous enterprise, already surround my tent, impatient of my delay.—"I come, I come"—Julia! if I fall, I shall fall with honour, and you will not blush to say—Rivers was my friend!

My ardent prayers arise to Heaven for your happiness, and that of the generous Mortimer. At this moment I forget all the past. My soul expands with virtuous

emulation. I reflect on his worth; I consider him as my friend; and the name of rival exists no longer.

Yet a little while, and all painful recollections, all mortal distinctions, will be at an end. Julia! a little while, and we shall meet where love will be no crime; where it will make our happiness, not our torment.

My heart dissolves in tenderness; tears rush to my eyes;—there is yet one way in which Rivers may still live—and live beloved.

A soft, a delightful tie, will soon be added to those which already bind you to the soul of your husband.—Julia! the name of Rivers may still be dear, still familiar.

—The clock strikes one—Far other thoughts croud on my mind—far other dread-

dreadful ſcenes!——" I come, my brave companions! May Heaven aſſiſt and proſper us!"

Farewell Julia! By time, abſence, miſfortune, every tender, mournful recollection, unſpeakably endeared. Generous Mortimer, farewel! Ye are worthy of each other—in each other may you be completely bleſt.

In continuation.

Julia! 'tis done! my heart preſaged aright—the hand of death is on me—and Heaven is gracious.—I know your gentle heart will deeply feel;—but do not grieve immoderately,——mine ſhall ſorrow no more—

Julia! firſt loved, and lateſt remembered, accept from your dying Rivers—a ſolemn—a laſt adieu!

Oh! I have much to ſay—but ſtrength fails—the mortal wound bleeds faſt.

Hear me Heaven—O hear! and ſhower thy choiceſt bleſſings on the head of my love, when mine is laid in the duſt. And, if ſhe ſhould remember with pity—perhaps with feelings ſtill more tender—the once loved—unfortunate Rivers,—impute it not as guilt!

Julia now! Oh now, for the laſt time, farewell! My heart pants—my dazzling eyes—never again ſhall I trace that beloved name. Forever! Oh, treaſure of my ſoul, farewell forever!

RIVERS.

LETTER

LETTER CIX.

To Miſs Herbert from Sally Dormer.

I am afraid, dear Madam, you will hardly be able to make out this letter, it ſo blotted with my tears: How hard would that heart be that could with-hold them!

I always loved my dear maſter, but now I almoſt adore him. He retired to his dreſſing-room to read the packet; and I being in the next, ſitting by my Lady's bed-ſide, heard him ſobbing aloud, as if his heart would burſt aſunder. When he returned, and attempted ſpeaking to my Lady, his tears quite ſuffocated him. I roſe to retire; for I thought he would not like to betray his grief before his ſervant. My ſweet Lady gave me a look of approbation.

Yet, ah Madam! why ſhould men be aſhamed to weep? Did not the ſame God form us both, with hearts to feel for the afflicted? Why then ſhould that be called weakneſs in men, which is thought virtue in women? But I forget to whom I am writing. Pardon the boldneſs which is the effect of your indulgence.

I have not leiſure to tranſcribe the Will of Lord Rivers, which is long; I ſhall therefore endeavour to give you a brief account of the particulars. The titles, and half of the family eſtate, at the death of Lord Cleveland, deſcend to his couſin Mr Stanley; the other half Lord Rivers requeſts his father to divide equally between his ſiſters. Out of his own eſtate, by his mother, he bequeathes one thouſand a-year, after his father's death, to the eldeſt ſon of Sir Charles Mortimer, requeſting that he may bear the name of Rivers.

He

He leaves a number of ſmall legacies, among which are ten pounds yearly to his nurſe, fifty to educate ſix poor boys; and, would you believe it, Madam, ſixty for mournings to me, "becauſe of my care and attention to my Lady during her illneſs." Oh, Madam! was not this kindly and condeſcendingly done in Lord Rivers? Sure I am, I ſhall remember him with gratitude the longeſt hour I have to live.

My Lady ſent for me this moment. "Sally," ſaid ſhe, "order the carriage, and go directly to the Grove. Tell Lady Sophia I am unable to write, and Sir Charles will not conſent to my going to ſee her juſt now. Entreat her to come to me, though but for one hour; I ſhall be better able to ſupport the meeting with the reſt of the family, if that with her were over."

In continuation.

I am returned, dear Madam, and at this moment Lady Sophia is above with my miſtreſs. When I reached the Grove, I trembled ſo, my limbs could hardly ſupport me into the houſe. When I ſent up my name, the ſweet young Lady came down, the very image of deſpair. The moment ſhe ſaw me, ſhe burſt into a flood of tears: "Sally," ſaid ſhe, "you have a compaſſionate heart. You knew my brother well; he has not been unmindful of you; ſurely you will never forget him who was the friend of every one?"

She ſtepped into the carriage, and deſiring me to follow her, pulled up all the blinds, and gave a looſe to her tears. Mine flowed inceſſantly; but I did not preſume to ſpeak. "O Sally," ſaid ſhe at one time, had you ever a brother? But I recollect you never knew the happineſs of ſuch a bleſſing, nor the miſery of loſing him."

She

She did not utter another ſyllable till we reached Harwood. Sir Charles came the inſtant the carriage ſtopped, and lifted her out. She really ſeemed more dead than alive. His eyes were filled with tears; neither of them ſpoke. He ſupported her with his arm to the door of my Lady's apartment, and then left them, to indulge without reſtraint the firſt violence of their ſorrow.

I hear my maſter gone to join them. Oh, Madam, though only a ſervant, I love them all ſo tenderly, I almoſt think I have a right to ſhare in their ſorrows; ſure I am, none more ſincerely ſympathiſes in them.

She is gone; ſweet gentle afflicted Lady Sophia. I really fear my Lady will ſuffer from ſuch conſtant agitation. Sir Charles has given orders that none ſhall enter her apartment till he ring, as he is going to read aloud to her, to try, if poſſible, and make

make her ſleep, as ſhe has hardly cloſed her eyes for three nights.

This family is to go into mourning as for a brother; I muſt haſten and give the neceſſary orders. Wherefore, with due reſpect, I ſubſcribe myſelf,

Madam,

Your obedient humble ſervant,

SARAH DORMER.

LETTER CX.

Lady Mortimer to Miſs Herbert.

Harwood.

I know the anxiety of your gentle heart Maria, and haſten to relieve it.—No, my humane friend, you have nothing to fear for me on this occaſion. There is a tenderneſs,

derneſs, an enthuſiam in my preſent ſorrow, that ſuſtains and elevates, inſtead of depreſſing my mind.

At liberty to indulge that ſoft overflowing grief, occaſioned by the death of the ever lamented Rivers, I conſider that tenderneſs as a virtue which formerly appeared a crime.

One hour of his ſuppoſed falſehood coſt me more piercing anguiſh, than I now endure from the certainty of his death. That ſorrow left my ſoul deſolate and hopeleſs; this is cheared by hopes that will never deceive. That was ſecret and undivided; this is ſoothed by the participation of the kindeſt and moſt gentle of human hearts. That was embittered by wounded pride, and redoubled by ſelf-reproach; this is endeared by conſcious rectitude, and ſanctified by friendſhip. That was the weakneſs of nature; this is the boaſt of humanity!

We

We ſet out yeſterday, with the ſolemnity of a funeral, to viſit the unhappy Lord Cleveland, and teſtify our reverence for the memory of his lamented ſon. The meeting was affecting beyond deſcription. Though all our hearts were engroſſed with the ſame ſubject, no one had courage to pronounce the name of Rivers.

To take off ſomething from our diſmal ſilence, Lord Cleveland propoſed driving me round the Park, while Sir Charles attended the young Ladies into the garden. I readily embraced this offer. The inſtant we got out of ſight, the worthy old man gave vent to his ſorrows and alternately extolled the virtues of his ſon, and expreſſed the grief and deſpair in which his death had involved him.

We were ſo much engaged with this intereſting ſubject, that we paid little regard to the length of the way; but, on the

horſes

horſes ſtopping at the entrance of a ſhrubbery, we raiſed our eyes, when the firſt object we beheld was poor nurſe, ſitting in the hermitage, and wiping away the tears which fell faſt from her eyes.

The good creature aroſe the moment ſhe perceived us, and attempted ſtealing away unobſerved; but my Lord, with his uſual humanity, called her back; told her he was ſorry for her affliction, and making her a preſent, deſired her to come every Sunday, and dine at the Grove; and never omit bringing her little George, as he was reſolved to ſuperintend the child's education himſelf.

We entered the Hermitage. Ah, maria! what were my feelings at that moment! I was leaning on his Lordſhip's arm; he ſtood ſome minutes ſilent; then graſping my hand with a look of unutterable anguiſh, and an accent that thrilled

through my very ſoul, he cried, "Oh Lady Mortimer! there was a time!" here he pauſed, and perceiving my tears flow, "Forgive, O forgive," exclaimed he," a fond afflicted father, for thus indulging himſelf at your expence. I know I ought not to reflect on the paſt; all that belongs to creatures ſo ignorant and ſhort-ſighted as we are, is to act ſuitably to preſent circumſtances;—yet, at times, I am ſo weak as to accuſe myſelf of having deſtroyed my child, by precipitating his entrance into the army."

I ſaid every thing I could, to combat an idea, fatal above all others to the peace of a mind like his. I reminded him, that, tho' we confined our narrow views to ſecond cauſes, and events which we termed accidents, there was in effect no ſuch thing as chance; that circumſtances ſeemingly moſt caſual were all under the direction of a great, firſt, inviſible cauſe; the wiſdom of whoſe govern-

government, though we could not comprehend, it would be the height of impiety to queſtion.

He liſtened to me with looks of benign complacency; told me that there was ſomethinng ſo peculiarly tender in his feelings for me, and ſo ſoothing in my ſympathy with him, that my ſociety, and that of Sir Charles, was the only ſource from which he could at preſent derive the ſmalleſt comfort; he therefore intreated, if not injurious to my health, that we would indulge him with our company at the Grove as often as poſſible.

He ſhowed me a letter from his ſon, which had likewiſe come in the laſt fatal packet. In it he mentions his wiſh to leave Lady Sophia his repeating-watch, which had been his mother's: But afraid to ſhew her a preference which might pain his other ſiſter, he ſays, with a delicacy

peculiarly his own, that it would oblige him if his father would accept of it, and beſtow it on her as his own gift.

What a noble, what a delicate mind was his! How ſuperior, even on trifling occaſions!

When deprived of ſuch a friend Maria, the heart taſtes no conſolation equal to that of continually recalling his loved idea. Memory preſents his form to our eyes in ſo lively a manner, that we ſee, we hear, we ſtill ſeem to converſe with the perſon once ſo dear; and this imaginary intercourſe becomes a real enjoyment. We repulſe thoſe whoſe importunate concern leads them to offer us premature conſolation; our grief becomes our only good; it holds the place of our lamented friend; and our ſelf-love joins with our tenderneſs to render that grief unſpeakably precious. We take pleaſure in recalling an affection,

that

that at once flattered and delighted us; and congratulate ourselves on having had merit to deserve being the object of so tender and lasting an attachment.

Such are the soothing reflections that mingle with the various sentiments, which the death of the much loved, and most deserving Rivers, has awakened in my bosom. If they do not banish my sorrow, they seem at least to justify its violence, and, in time, cannot fail to alleviate it.—Why, my friend! should we seek to do more? Alas! too soon do we forget even those we held most dear! And time, which dries up our tears, effaces also from our hearts, those pious affections, and virtuous resolutions, which accompany adversity, and are the precious fruit of early disappointment.

Farewell! I ever am your faithful and affectionate, though much afflicted friend,

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER CXI.

Miſs Herbert to Lady Mortimer.

London.

With all the painful ſolicitude and anxiety, which your ſituation and my friendſhip juſtify, I expected the arrival of your laſt; and thank Heaven, that the ſame piety and peaceful reſignation, which have attended you through every ſtage of your difficult journey, continue to ſupport and calm your mind; the heavenly frame of which, appears to me more worthy of envy than commiſeration.

May Heaven pity the diſconſolate family of Rivers, whoſe ſorrows are exquiſitely embittered, and who needed not the anguiſh of this ſeparation, to convince them of the value of the treaſure they have loſt!

Oh,

Oh, my friend! though power and riches, and honour and ambition, pafs away, nor leave one trace behind, of all the reftlefs defires they excited, or tranfient pleafures they fupplied, let the remembrance of virtues and misfortunes like his be forever cherifhed in our hearts; to chaften the arrogance of pride, moderate our wifhes for profperity in this ever-changing world, and teach adverfity to look beyond it.

The variety of diftreffing circumftances in which you have been involved fince we parted, have awakened the moft reftlefs defire in my breaft, again to behold the friend I fondly love.

I had ventured to hint this wifh to my moft indulgent parent, who, ever ready to oblige me, chearfully confented to my making you a vifit; but laft week, he was attacked with a flight fever, which renders it impoffible for me to accompliſh my journey at prefent. I hope it will not be long, how-

however, before I ſhall in perſon aſſure my friend, of the laſting affection of her

MARIA HERBERT.

LETTER CXII.

Lady Sophia Rivers to Lady Mortimer.

Grove.

It is with ſenſible regret, my dear Madam, I am forced to be abſent from you to-day; in order to receive thoſe unwelcome viſitors, whom cuſtom authoriſes to intrude on the afflicted, with empty forms, and unmeaning expreſſions of condolence; and who, by impoſing reſtraint on thoſe violent emotions, and heart-breaking ſorrows, in which they cannot poſſibly ſympathiſe, render the weight of calamity inſupportable.

And do you indeed, my kind, my generous friend; invite me to pour without reſtraint, into your compaſſionate boſom, the bitter ſorrows with which mine is overwhelmed?

whelmed? Yes, I will thankfully accept this beſt privilege of friendſhip; a friendſhip which at preſent forms all my conſolation. I will look up with wonder and gratitude to that Being who has raiſed up for me ſo powerful a ſupport, in this hour of unequalled affliction.

Other friends ſay they pity, but you deeply feel for me; others adviſe, but you ſympathiſe with me; others ſtrive—O vain attempt! to lead my thoughts from the only object by which they can be groſſed, but you take a melancholy pleaſure in enumerating and dwelling on thoſe tender circumſtances, which increaſe, and yet give an ineffable ſoftneſs to my grief; and in applauding thoſe virtues, which I know I ought more ſtudiouſly to imitate, than vainly deplore.

From my dear afflicted parent I ſtrive to conceal that diſtreſs, which would only

ſerve

ſerve to aggravate his own. It is my duty, my earneſt deſire, to conſole, not afflict him. Even the preſence of my gentle Iſabella gives me no relief. When ſhe looks at me, indeed, her mild eyes are ſuffuſed with tears; ſhe preſſes my hand with affectionate tenderneſs, and confeſſes that my ſorrow, though extreme, is allowable. Her's—forgive me! appears too reaſonable, too angelic, too diſpaſſionate. She utters none of thoſe touching exclamations, which, in a warm and artleſs mind, are the genuine language of deep felt diſtreſs. You, you alone, my deareſt Lady Mortimer, can enter into every feeling of my ſoul; on your's alone are the virtues of Rivers indelibly impreſſed, and only by you will they be everlaſtingly remembered, and tenderly and ſincerely lamented.

The heart labouring under ſorrow and reſtraint, will at times burſt forth with ungovernable violence. If my anguiſh appear

pear to you exceſſive, my regrets immoderate; if they will rob me of your tenderneſs, or ſink me in your eſteem, O tell me ſo with your wonted candour, and I will reſtrain, if I cannot conquer them.

Aided by your pious example, and encouraged by your approbation, in a more reſigned, quiet, and ſubmiſſive ſtate, I truſt you will ſoon behold her, whom you honour with your eſteem, and whoſe higheſt ambition is to ſecure the continuance of that bleſſing, by a conduct worthy of your approbation, and ſuitable to the character of your friend,

SOPHIA RIVERS.

LETTER

LETTER CXIII.

Lady Mortimer to Miſs Herbert.

Harwood.

How different, how very different, Maria, are the ſorrows occaſioned by the death, from wounds inflicted by the unkindneſs of a friend?

Where affection has been tender and lively, grief muſt be exquiſite and laſting; but exempted from the anguiſh of wounded ſelf-love, virtuous ſorrow is peaceful and ſerene; and when ſoothed with the hope of immortality, by rendering us converſant with ſolemn and ſublime objects, raiſes us above the little vexing inquietudes of this feveriſh life.

You

You will eaſily believe that my mind is often ſad, and always ſerious. How gracious is Providence, in gradually unlooſing thoſe ſtrong ties, by which our affections are held enchained to the world! Methinks our departed friends form a ſort of intermediate chain between this life and the next, by means of which, our thoughts can more eaſily aſcend to thoſe great, awful, and inviſible objects, which are veiled from mortal ſight; and realize thoſe future ſcenes of ineffable glory, where thoſe pure and exalted ſpirits, who formed our higheſt bleſs on earth, appear to the triumphant eye of faith, awaiting, with hope and joy, the hour of our releaſe from mortal toil, and of our entrance to immortal ſecurity and happineſs.

I forget, Maria, that you are ſtill unacquainted with Sir Charles, and fear I ſhall tire you with conſtantly repeating his praiſe. Yet, oh how can I forbear? How

can I repreſs my admiration of his amiable diſpoſitions, and exalted ſentiments, of which every day affords new proofs.

He talks of our lamented Rivers continually, and with ſuch tenderneſs, as not only renders the ſubject eaſy, but delightful.

Laſt night, the weather being remarkably mild, he aſked me if I would accompany him the length of the garden. "There is one object there," ſaid he, "which my Julia has too long neglected to viſit." Then pauſing a few moments, and deeply ſighing, "You cannot now, with theſe dear hands, ſtrew the laurel he planted, on the grave of Rivers; but, may not the friends he fondly loved, at leaſt conſecrate it with tears to his memory?" I thanked him with mine for this proof of kind remembrance, and moſt delicate friendſhip.

We

We ſet out: The ſun's laſt feeble rays gilded the wood; he departed; and the pale ſtar of evening, increaſing in luſtre as the ſhades gradually cloſed over our heads, ſerved to guide us to the ſolemn ſcene of mournful recollection.

We walked ſo ſlowly, that, by the time we reached the alcove, where I reſted a few minutes, every object began to aſſume that uncouth appearance, which is borrowed from the obſcurity of the medium through which it is ſeen.

As we approached the well-known ſpot, a ſecret inexpreſſible horror ſeized me; my limbs trembled, my heart palpitated, and I ſtood ſome moments irreſolute whether to proceed. Sir Charles perceived my emotion, and, reproaching himſelf for expoſing me to it, by his raſh requeſt, intreated me to retire: But my curioſity was excited, by perceiving ſomething white be-

tween me and the laurel. I asked Sir Charles if he knew what it was?

"If we cannot fulfil the request of our departed friend, my Julia," said he, with an affecting solemnity, "let us at least presume to interpret his wishes. If the thin veil which separates the visible from the invisible world, permit departed spirits at times to behold those left behind, the sacrifice of a grateful and unfeigned friendship, must supply them with pleasure, suited to the dignity even of their new existence."

By this time we reached the laurel, close by the side of which was raised a beautiful piece of architecture in the form of an altar. It was adorned with military ensigns; on the top of it was placed an urn of white marble, round which reclined, in different attitudes of sorrow, four figures representing the Virtues. On a small tablet, the following

lowing lines were inſcribed, in black letters, of which Sir Charles gave me a copy, at my requeſt, this morning; for ſuch is the ſingular delicacy of his mind, that I know he would have felt aukward and uneaſy in repeating them even to me, and it was then too dark to read them.

Sacred to friendſhip, conſtancy, and truth,
To all the charms of uncorrupted youth,
This monumental marble bears a name;
Forever hallowed in the rolls of fame;
Their trueſt friend, their glory, and their pride,
The weeping Virtues loſt when Rivers died!

Alas! an empty name remains alone
Of worth too early loſt, too ſhortly known.
Yet, ſince denied to rear with pious hands
Thy ſacred tomb, in diſtant hoſtile lands,
Accept, bleſt ſhade! the rites we here beſtow,
To guard thy mem'ry, and to ſoothe our woe.
Affection's fond regret, and frequent tear,
Truth's ardent praiſe, and friendſhip's vow ſincere,

The

The wiſh, which Piety herſelf might crown,
The wiſh to make thy goodneſs all our own,
To worth like thine a laſting being give,
And in our lives make each perfection live.

Your heart, my beloved friend, will ſupply, at this moment, the trueſt picture of my feelings, during that "tender walk." Ah, Maria! how many are the ſources of elegant pleaſure which ſenſibility awakens in the human breaſt! Nor is it only the ſource of our pureſt pleaſures, it is often that alſo of our moſt exalted virtues, by that quick perception of what is right and proper, and that diſguſt at what is mean and baſe, which it creates.

"How much," ſays my friend, "may you benefit yourſelf and others, by ſpending ſo many hours in retirement?"

Taking that for granted, which I think is very doubtful, whether I am capable at any

any time of doing ſo; yet you are not to learn, that affliction, by quenching the fire of imagination, depreſſing the ſpirits, and clogging the reaſoning faculty, unfits the mind, either for the ſallies of fancy, or the inveſtigation of truth. By a ſlight exertion, we may conquer indolence, or excite induſtry; but what exertion will ſerve to ſhake off that torpid languor, which often invades our intellectual faculties, even in thoſe ſituations that are thought moſt favourable for their exerciſe and improvement?

How humbling this to the boaſtful pride of man!

In every ſtate of mind, and in all ſituations, my friend may rely on the invariable eſteem and tender attachment of her

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER CXIV.

Lady Sophia Rivers to Lady Mortimer.

Grove.

Nothing ſurpriſes me more, my dear Madam, than to hear continually of the deceitfulneſs and ingratitude of mankind. Happy am I in having never experienced either. It is ſurely our intereſt to believe the beſt we can of our ſpecies; to think of living among wretches and villains, is enough to render exiſtence a burden. How much am I indebted to your tender ſympathy—how much more to your generous candour? Many there are who will pity, ſome who will praiſe, but few, very few, who can remonſtrate with delicacy, and blame with gentleneſs: Yet, ſuch is the friend I have found in you! A friend, who ſeeks

no

no other reward for the moſt diſintereſted concern for my welfare, than that I ſhould join with her in doing every thing to promote it.

Methinks I cannot better repay your ſolicitude for the recovery of my peace and happineſs, than by aſſuring you that I am doing every thing to regain them. The former is the object of my wiſhes; to it all my hopes are directed. The viſits of the latter are ſo rare and tranſient to us mortals, that I deſpair of renewing my acquaintance with her, till I ſhall meet her with my departed brother, in thoſe unclouded regions, where ſhe ſhall be ſecurely—eternally my own.

I have enjoyed, for ſome days paſt, a ſort of liſtleſs tranquility of ſpirit, which is not unpleaſing. In ſuch a ſtate, we are prone to flatter ourſelves, that we have overcome the world, becauſe we feel a perfect

fect indifference to all its pleaſures and purſuits. But I know too much of my own heart to think thus. I know that, though grief may exhauſt the powers of the ſoul, and lull the ſenſes aſleep, yet, when time hath moderated our affliction, they will again be rouſed by their proper objects; we will again feel that we have a violent ſtruggle to maintain, and turbulent paſſions to conquer.

Since the hour that I loſt the kindeſt of brothers, his image has never been a moment abſent from my thoughts.

I know not to what cauſe it is owing, that I ſtill enter every place where we uſed to be together, with a kind of vague expectation of beholding him; my wiſhes ſeem inſenſibly to convert themſelves into ſo many realities; I often think I hear his foot on the ſtairs, I liſten for his voice, I even fly to meet him. Ah, Madam! what

is

is my anguiſh, my deſpair, when I recollect that theſe eyes ſhall never more behold him!

I ſtrive to ſoothe my melancholy, at times, with the hope that Rivers is ſtill ſenſible to the tenderneſs of my regrets, that he ſtill pities thoſe ſorrows, which none was ſo ready to ſhare or alleviate. An involuntary movement of my ſoul leads me to pour them forth, as if he were ſtill preſent; and, even in this ideal intercourſe, my oppreſſed heart finds relief, if not conſolation. Tell me, my wiſe inſtructreſs, my dear Lady Mortimer, tell me, whether you think there is any foundation for theſe ſentiments? whether you believe that our departed friends ſtill take a concern in thoſe once ſo dear? Sure I am, none is more tenderly intereſted in this queſtion than you; for none ever felt more exquiſitely than you all the delightful ſympathies of love

love and friendſhip; none ever more deeply mourned the deprivation of them.

Adieu, my dear Madam; by favouring me with your thoughts on this ſubject, you will add to the many obligations conferred on your grateful friend,

SOPHIA RIVERS.

LETTER CXV.

Lady Mortimer to Lady Sophia Rivers.

Harwood.

The taſk you have aſſigned me, my dear but partial young friend, is one to which my powers are by no means equal; nor am I at preſent able to purſue ſo difficult a ſubject. When we meet, I will communicate my thoughts at large: Mean time,

I will confeſs to you, that though the idea of our departed friends continuing to be the inviſible ſpectators of our conduct, is extremely ſoothing, eſpecially in the firſt hours of deſpondent ſorrow, it appears rather to be the wiſh of nature, than the ſuggeſtion of reaſon. As it correſponds, however, with the moſt tender feelings of our hearts, and contradicts not the tenor of Scripture, I can ſee no harm in indulging it.

But, my dear Lady Sophia, there is a truth of a ſimilar kind, which is highly intereſting to our feelings, accords both with the light of reaſon and revelation, and which is of far more importance for us to aſcertain, than to ſpeculate about an opinion, with reſpect to which the mind muſt ever remain in a wavering and undetermined ſtate; I mean our mutual knowledge hereafter.

This conviction has not been the result of reaſoning alone, nor confined ſolely to the learned and civilized part of mankind. The wilds of America furniſh proofs of that "pleaſing hope, that fond deſire," of knowing and rejoining our dear departed friends, which, to our limited conceptions, ſeems almoſt eſſential to the happineſs of heaven. The poor untutored Indian, who dreams not of any higher power, than that ſun by whoſe beams he is warmed and nouriſhed, cheriſhes as his laſt and fondeſt hope, that of being admitted beyond the mountains to the abodes of his fathers; and of recognizing there the beloved wife, or warlike ſon, whoſe loſs has wrung his firm heart with anguiſh, though it has neither extorted one tear from his eye, nor ſigh from his boſom.

When next we meet, this favourite ſubject will be matter of pleaſing diſcuſſion: We will then have the aid of an abler caſuiſt

caſuiſt than either of us can poſſibly be: Meanwhile give free ſcope to your natural and innocent grief. Our emotions neceſſarily exhauſt themſelves by their own violence; and, when the firſt tumult of ſorrow ſubſides, reſignation will ſoothe your woes, and all will again become ſerene and tranquil, in that virtuous boſom.

We cannot, my dear friend, in this inclement region, expect to enjoy perpetual ſunſhine; but, by habituating our minds to look beyond it, though the clouds of adverſity may darken our proſpects, they will never overwhelm our ſouls. By uniting the important concerns of a future ſtate with the virtuous enjoyments of a preſent, we taſte the moſt exalted pleaſures of which we are capable. We give ſtability to thoſe which are naturally evaneſcent; and, by extending our views to an eternal

exiſtence, elude the bitter re-flection, that a few fleeting years muſt put a period to the fondeſt love, and moſt faithful friendſhip.

Whatever interruptions our happineſs may receive from neceſſary trials, and unavoidable evils, may no perverſe diſpoſition, no guilty action of our own, ever deſtroy our tranquility! May the enjoyments of life be received with thankfulneſs, its trials with ſubmiſſion, and the moderation of our deſires and expectations, prove our ſecurity againſt its painful diſappointments. Believe me, dear Lady Sophia, that I am your truly affectionate friend,

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER

LETTER CXVI.

Lord Cleveland to Captain Stanley.

Grove.

DEAR HARRY,

My long and intimate acquaintance with your character, leaves me no room to queſtion either the ſincerity of your regrets for the untimely death of your loved friend and my lamented ſon, or your ſympathy with my ſevere affliction. I accept of both, as well as your kind offer of ſpending a few days here, as pleaſing proofs of your attachment to me, as well as reſpect to the memory of him, who lives no more, but in the hearts of ſuch friends.

As I have heard it alledged, that want of fortune was the only bar to your union

with a moſt deſerving woman, allow me to put you in immediate poſſeſſion of part of that eſtate, which, by the courſe of human affairs, will one day devolve to you.

In the happineſs of others, my dear Harry, I muſt now ſeek for my own. Alas! Happineſs and I will be forever ſtrangers, till I ſhall be permitted to rejoin my dear departed ſon, in thoſe manſions where alone we can hope to taſte it pure, and to enjoy it without interruption. I am, with eſteem,

Your friend,

And affectionate kinſman,

CLEVELAND.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

Lady Mortimer to Miſs Herbert.

Harwood.

In what terms ſhall I thank my generous friend, for the lively intereſt ſhe takes in my happineſs! Every one is ready to commiſerate the unfortunate; but to ſhare cordially in the proſperity of our friends, requires a much greater effort of generoſity.

My loved Maria is not to learn, that Heaven, for the wiſeſt ends, has diſpoſed the human mind to ſympathiſe much more keenly in the ſorrows than the joys of others. The happy and proſperous are in a great meaſure independent of our good offices; but all the influence of tender com-

compaſſion is requiſite to conquer our love of eaſe, and prompt us to afford the miſerable that inſtant relief, of which they often ſtand in need.

Bleſt as I am at preſent, Maria, is it not criminal, is it not ungrateful, to allow any thing like apprehenſion to ſteal into my boſom? Yet, there are hours, when a dark cloud ſeems to envelop every proſpect, and neither reaſon nor religion can combat the gloomy fears which aſſail me. Think not, however, theſe fears are on my own account: No, my friend, tho' I have now the immediate proſpect of one of the ſevereſt ſhocks to which the human conſtitution is ſubject, I bleſs God my mind is ſerene, and I am entirely free from thoſe terrors to which our ſex are liable in ſuch circumſtances. Believe me, when I conſider the very limited period of our exiſtence here, it appears of ſmall importance, whether we are called off the ſtage in the beginning, the middle,

middle, or the end of the day, provided we have aright diſcharged the part aſſigned us. But, though I fear not death, Maria, I fear, oh I greatly fear, the ſorrow that would pierce the gentleſt, kindeſt heart that ever glowed, ſhould my approaching hour of danger prove that of our mortal ſeparation.

Can I look around, and mark the courſe of human affairs, can I reflect on the mixed nature of all earthly enjoyment, the tranſient duration of all worldly proſperity? can I poſſeſs ſuch ſingular felicity, and not rejoice with trembling?—Ah, Maria, you know not what it is to make the whole happineſs of the perſon on earth moſt dear to you: It forms a ſtrong, a generous tie. To diſſolve it ſeems little leſs than to annihilate the very ſoul. But I forget myſelf. Pardon me for intruding on you with this melancholy ſubject, and hide, from an unfeeling world, ſentiments of which it can form

form no idea, weakneſs for which it can find no excuſe.

Juſt as I had finiſhed the laſt ſentence, which was wet with my tears, Sir Charles entered. A conſcious bluſh, an involuntary movement to conceal what I had written, excited his curioſity; my tears increaſed it. I did not oppoſe his reading it; I thought it not amiſs to ſuggeſt this ſubject to his thoughts, which I felt was too tender for converſation. I had twice endeavoured to introduce it; but, the moment I did ſo, my whole reſolution failed, at the thought of giving him pain.

He looked at me ſome moments with unutterable tenderneſs: "Let us not fear, my loved, my admirable Julia," ſaid he, "let us confidently truſt. That Being who hath conducted us to each other, and bound our hearts together in the moſt tender union, will aſſuredly ſpare us to ſupport

port each other through the labyrinths of life; to enjoy with thankfulness that singular felicity he hath bestowed, and to fulfil the gracious designs of his Providence, in dispensing to others a share of our own unequalled happiness."

In this manner does the best of men beguile me of my apprehensions; and, instead of reasoning with a mind, at present too weak to oppose arguments with any thing but fears, he soothes my inquietudes, and diverts my thoughts to future chearful prospects; and, before our conversations end, I have often almost forgotten the painful subjects by which they were introduced.

I must not, however, lose sight of that which engaged me to address you this morning. At this eventful period, I experience one of the desires most deeply implanted in the human breast, that of living

living in the remembrance of thoſe we have loved, " when the place that once knew us ſhall know us no more."

Accordingly, I have drawn up a paper, aſſigning to each of my friends ſome trifling memorial of me; and, what is of much more importance, have ſketched out a plan, which I humbly think would prove moſt ſuitable to the ſituation of my infant, ſhould it live to ſee the light. I have alſo written to my beloved huſband, and ſaid all which the moſt tender affection can ſuggeſt, to ſupport and reconcile his mind to an event, which may be near, but which, I fondly hope, will ſtill be long protracted.

The key of a ſmall caſket which contains theſe papers I here incloſe, intreating my deareſt friend to keep it till it ſhall be demanded from her. And now, theſe ſeveral taſks fulfilled, with a mind compoſed

sed and easy, I await my approaching hour of trial, resigned, I humbly trust, to the will of my Maker. Since you cannot encourage me by your presence, aid me by your prayers. Maria! need I say, be a mother to my child, if its own survive not. But I must quit this subject. May Heaven forever bless my friend! and may she never be without the same sweet consolation, in all the various situations of life, which her friendship ever poured into the bosom of her faithful, affectionate, and truly grateful

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER CXVIII.

To Miss Herbert from Sally Dormer.

Harwood.

Rejoice and thank Heaven with me, my dear Miss Herbert; your beloved Lady

Mortimer, and my deareſt miſtreſs, is this bleſſed morning the happy mother of a lovely boy. He is not quite ſo ſtout as could have been wiſhed, but ſeems in perfect health, and, pleaſe Heaven, ſhall have the beſt of nurſing.

Unleſs I could paint Sir Charles's looks, I need not attempt deſcribing his happineſs; my Lady will ſoon, I hope, be able to tell you all about it herſelf. At preſent I cannot be wanted, and grudge every moment that I am forced to be abſent from my ſweet precious charge. O! Miſs Herbert, did you but ſee the dear little angel; his mild eyes ſo like his father's; but I hear him cry. Farewell, dear Madam, in great haſte,

Your very happy
Humble ſervant,

SARAH DORMER.

LETTER

LETTER CXIX.

Lady Mortimer to Miſs Herbert.

Harwood.

Once more reſtored to health and happineſs, once more I addreſs my beloved friend, and call on her to join with me in thankſgiving to that God, who hath delivered me from danger, and made me the happy mother of a living child.

O Maria! you muſt be a wife and a mother, the wife of Sir Charles Mortimer, and the mother of my boy, before you can form an idea of the new, the delightful ſenſations which expand my grateful boſom!

Never ſhall I forget the firſt ſound of his feeble voice; never, never, the look of unutterable tranſport with which his father gazed on his innocent countenance, placed him in my arms, thanked God for my ſafety, and bleſſed, fondly, repeatedly bleſſed me for this firſt pledge of conjugal felicity. Scarce would he allow me time to reflect on the enchanting novelty of my ſituation, or gratify the eager curioſity I felt to examine every feature of the little ſtranger. Again he took him in his arms; again and again careſſed the lovely unconſcious innocent; then reſtoring him to his fond mother, "My life! my Julia!" ſaid he, with the moſt endearing tenderneſs, "the names of Rivers and Mortimer will now be inſeparably united."

"Oh, may Heaven grant," rejoined I, "that the exalted virtues of each may be diſplayed in his advancing years!"

I am called away, Maria! a ſoft, an irreſiſtible voice,—a language that pleads to the heart—pleads eloquently, allures me. —Can you interpret its meaning?

Sir Charles himſelf brings the impatient, importunate mendicant. Ah, Maria! would you were a witneſs of this inchanting ſcene! To wiſh you ſupreme felicity, is to wiſh you the principal actor in ſuch another.

Again that feeble voice! "Cruel, unpitying, unrelenting"——Heavens! Maria, would you believe it, this is the language of my huſband! I muſt no more. Adieu, adieu.

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER CXX.

Lady Mortimer to Miſs Herbert.

Harwood.

Your delightful letter has reached me, and convinced me, of what I could not otherwiſe have believed, that it was poſſible for my happineſs to admit of an addition.

In the very zenith of gaiety, when the voice of a Fenduci, the violin of a Salomon, and the whole inchanting graces of a Siddons, combine to rivet you to London, can you, Maria! can you indeed be ſo generous, as to abandon that region of ever-new delight; to come down, in midſt of December's cold, to bleak hills, naked trees, frozen rivers, and, defying both the allurements of pleaſure, and the ſhafts of ridi-

ridicule, exchange the drawing-room for the nurſery, and the adulation of admirers for the cordial welcome of friends? Well, Damon and Pythias will no longer ſtand unrivalled in the records of fame. Britain, in our day, ſupplies a more exalted, more heroic proof of friendſhip!

To be ſerious, my beloved Maria, I am flattered beyond expreſſion, by this new inſtance of your kind attachment; and feel more gratitude than I can poſſibly expreſs, to Sir William, for conſenting to part with you, even for the ſhort period of a month.

Sir Charles is delighted with the near proſpect of embracing the choſen friend of his Julia. He bids me tell you, that, if there is any vanity in your compoſition, the accompliſhments of your new relation cannot fail to gratify it. For, tho' he has been but five weeks in the world,

he

he has made no ſmall noiſe there; and by this, as well as by other atchievements, has demonſtrated, that his talents are inferior to none of his age; and ſeem well calculated for being diſtinguiſhed, either at the bar or the ſenate, where ſound ſeems to be the ſterling commodity.

Come then, my beſt loved friend, and enhance the felicity of your Julia, by beholding and ſharing in it. Come, and enliven her peaceful hours; come, and convince her, that love, without friendſhip, is but half enjoyment. O come! and join with her in adoring that Being who hath formed her heart capable of taſting the moſt pure and exquiſite happineſs, and bleſſed her with all thoſe objects from whom it is to be derived.

Farewell, then, till we meet, my deareſt, kindeſt friend. Farewell,

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER

LETTER CXXI.

Miſs Lucy Herbert to Lady Mortimer.

London.

In truth, my dear Lady Mortimer, I know not whether I ought to conſider as an honour, or an inſult, the offer you have made me of your correſpondence; I fear it is only for want of Maria's that you content yourſelf with Lucy's epiſtles.

It is really unreaſonable in your Ladyſhip to demand amuſement from me, who have hardly as much left as to keep me from a lethargy, whilſt you are banqueting on the luxuries of ſocial joys. Could I play the hypocrite, I would tell you, that it is impoſſible for me to taſte of any, in the proſpect of a ſeparation from my ſiſter, at

a time too when her preſence is eſſentially neceſſary to my happineſs; but this would be mere cant. You are heartily welcome to her, and the longer you keep her the better. She has piqued my pride, by teſtifying ſuch joy on the proſpect of leaving us.

All the return I aſk for this diſintereſted conduct is, that you will tranſmit to me, by the earlieſt opportunity, an exact journal of the riſes and falls in the thermometer of raptures. I ſuppoſe on Friday evening the mercury will mount as if heated by the ſcorching blaſts of a ſouth-weſt wind. But, oh the ſinkings! when the ſunſhine of novelty ceaſes to warm the region of your brains, and cuſtom adds chilneſs to the cold blaſts of indifference! I beſeech you enjoy the equinoxial point of calm contentment. During the meridian of your tranſports, you will find "'tis bliſs but to a certain bound," and afterwards

wards—But I may ſpare myſelf the trouble of proſecuting the ſubject; experience alone will convince us of certain diſagreeable truths.

Maria only waits till ſhe ſee me fairly nooſed: She would have written herſelf by this poſt; but preparations for a journey and a marriage furniſh ample employment for all her faculties. I have had many letters from Harry, concerning the time when, and manner how, this weighty buſineſs is to be finiſhed. For my part, while prudence and intereſt, and ſuch pretending friends, were in arms againſt us, I could have ſet out in the waggon to meet and marry him: But, now that every obſtacle is removed, I proteſt my reſolution begins to ſtagger.——

He

He is come, my dear Lady Mortimer! he is come! "Who pray?" Why Harry Stanley, my Lover that now is, and Lord that will be to-morrow morning. "You wiſh to hear how I behaved at our firſt meeting?" Juſt as might be expected. I had collected together all the receipts for reſerve and decorum, all the maxims of matrimonial ſyſtem-builders, (who terrify us with the danger of ſhewing a man that we love him, after we have vowed at the altar to love him only, and love him till death). But, whether from want of capacity, clearly to comprehend theſe refinements, or from a pure principle of contradiction in my nature, or from that nature itſelf ſtepping in before philoſophy, and overturning all its maxims in a moment, I know not; but certain it is, the inſtant, the carriage ſtopt, my heart danced in a cotillion

cotillion meaſure; I flew down ſtairs, left prudence to follow me, as uſual, at her leiſure; ſprung into Harry's arms, told him I never was ſo happy in my life, and believed every word he ſaid on the ſame ſubject.

Tueſday.

——Oh! I have done a deed
To make me think, who never thought before,
And pauſe, and doubt, and aſk the wond'ring croud
If I am really married?——

Heigh-ho, and ſo adieu to the dear delights of concealment—the heart-beating pleaſure of the poſtman's double knock,—the fluttering expectation while breaking the ſeal, and the tranſporting joy of reading the very ſoul of love. You may laugh if you will; but enthuſiaſm, while it laſts, is felicity; and enthuſiaſm and matrimony (pray look around you) ſeem utterly incompatible. For me! I am reſolved to

cheriſh it, till I have neither eyes to ſee, ears to hear, nor one ſpark of kindneſs left to warm that heart, which, with its beſt affections, bids me ſubſcribe myſelf your friend,

LUCY HER-NO-NO-STANLEY.

LETTER CXXII.

Miſs Herbert to Mrs Stanley.

Harwood.

It is really dangerous, my dear Lucy, to witneſs happineſs, ſo compleat and ſo uncommon, as that which Sir Charles and Lady Mortimer enjoy; and I ſhould dread being envious of their felicity, did I not flatter myſelf that there is no room for envy in a heart where friendſhip has ſo long inhabited.

How

How amiable is true goodneſs, and how delightful the emulation it inſpires! The affability, the gentleneſs, the condeſcention, of my excellent friends, ſecure the warmeſt attachment from all their domeſtics, who ſerve them with a zeal and alacrity, in which a ſlaviſh ſenſe of duty ſeems to have no ſhare.

Their enlarged and cultivated minds, may juſtly be compared to the Heſperian trees, enriched at once with bloſſoms and fruit, the chearfulneſs of youth, and the wiſdom of age.

Attention and reſpect, ſo naturally flow from ſincere affection, that I am never more ſhocked, than with obſerving that careleſſneſs and indifference, whether real or affected, with which moſt men treat their wives in company. This muſt either reflect on a man's judgment, for having ſelected an unworthy partner, or on his heart,

heart, for neglecting to treat her with that reſpect to which ſhe has a claim, both on account of her own merit, and the confidence ſhe has repoſed in him, by truſting her whole happineſs to his care. How cruel, how ungenerous the man, who can wantonly abuſe or betray ſuch a truſt!

Sir Charles's whole manner to Lady Mortimer, is expreſſive of the elegance of his own mind, and the gentleneſs of her's, and inſenſibly directs the attention of the company continually towards her. This obliges her to lead the converſation more frequently than is agreeable to a perſon of ſuch ſingular modeſty; but ſhe does it with a grace ſo peculiarly her own, that one not only pardons her huſband for impoſing the taſk, but takes a lively ſhare in the pleaſures his animated countenance diſcovers on ſuch occaſions.

His

His fondneſs for his child is juſt what one would expect from a man poſſeſſed of ſo much tenderneſs. I have heard the happy parents canvaſs together the modern ſyſtems of education, when they have always agreed, that, ſince they could not form a world for their ſon, they would endeavour to form their ſon for the world.

"Could we fold up the young mind," ſaid Sir Charles, "like the ſheet of paper" to which it has been compared, till the ripened judgment could determine what characters were moſt fit to be impreſſed upon it, we might then ſafely follow the advice of ſome modern philoſophers, and delay or omit altogether the chief object of education, that of inſpiring juſt principles, and pious ſentiments. But this is impoſſible: The ardent curioſity of youth, ever in ſearch of food for its own indulgence, muſt be gratified. And, if we do not improve that important

ſeaſon,

ſeaſon, by proper culture, the world will anticipate the hour of reaſon, and, long before it arrive, poiſon the tender mind with the ſophiſtry of prejudice, or enſlave it to the anarchy of the paſſions.

" All objects derive force from novelty, and, in early life eſpecially, we are prone to admire what is new. Is it to be ſuppoſed, with this bias in favour of what is faſhionable in opinion, and at an age when paſſion powerfully oppoſes the reſtraints of principle, that a young man is better able to form a ſyſtem for the regulation of his heart and conduct, than his father, who, to the ſame ſtrength of intellect, adds that experience, which confirms us in truth, by expoſing to us the danger of error ?"

Such are the ſentiments of a man, the ſoundneſs of whoſe judgment unites with the ſenſibility of his heart, to give weight and propriety to all his opinions ; I am proud

proud to boaſt they are in every reſpect conformable to my own.

Adieu, deareſt Lucy. I am convinced that, if felicity is attainable on earth, it is only to be found in the poſſeſſion of a well-regulated mind; the exerciſe of pious and virtuous affections, and the enjoyment of the quiet, ſincere, and elegant pleaſures, of a domeſtic life, and rural retirement. In ſhort, it is to be found in cultivating the diſpoſitions, and imitating the conduct, of Sir Charles and Lady Mortimer. Adieu,

MARIA HERBERT.

FINIS.

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